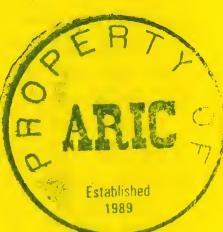
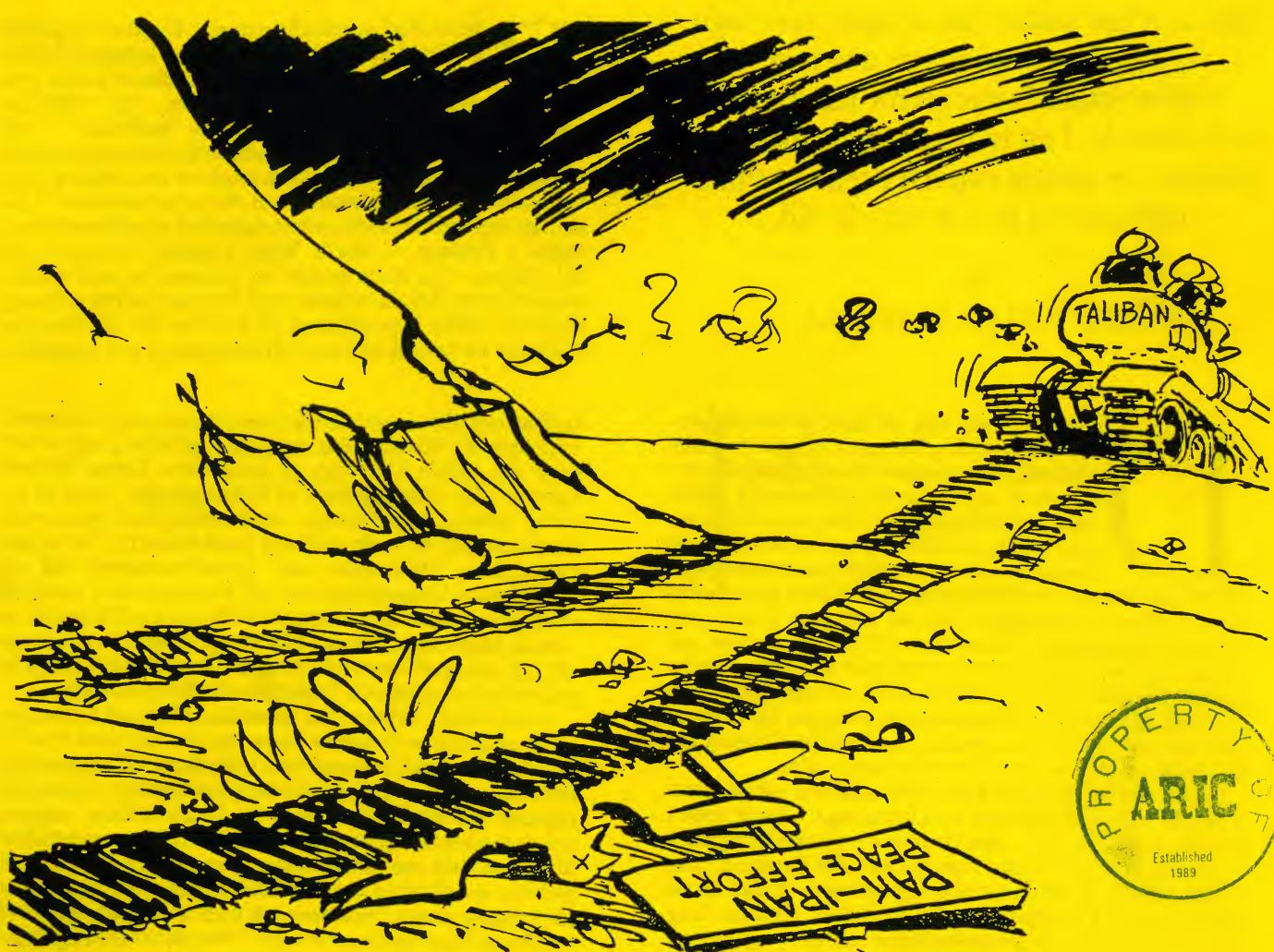


Pressklipp om Afghanistan



Juli-September 1998

Årgång 10



PRESSKLIPP OM AFGHANISTAN

□ är ett samarbetsprojekt mellan Svenska Afghanistankommittén (SAK) och Afghanistankomiteen i Norge (AiN). □ utges varannan månad som en nyhetsservice för SAKs och AiNs medlemmar, lokalkommittéer och styrelser. □ detta nummer är sammanställt och redigerat av Börje Almqvist och Peter Hjukström. □ pressklipp till kommande nummer mottas tacksamt från läsekretsen till adress: Svenska Afghanistankommittén, Sturegatan 16, 114 36 STOCKHOLM, SVERIGE (Märk kuvertet med "Pressklipp"). □ prenumerationens priset för 1998 är 250 kronor och inbetalas på pg 64 23 90-9, Svenska Afghanistankommittén. Notera på inbetalningskortet att betalningen avser prenumeration på "Pressklipp".

□ Detta nummer är presslagt 980921

Talibanerna vill återskapa förmodernt samhälle

SVD 980716

De afghanska talibanerna dök upp ur intet och har under det senaste året tagit kontrollen över större delen av Afghanistan. Deras terror har gjort dem ökända. I en nyutkommen antologi försöker en grupp experter reda ut vilka talibanerna är och vad de vill.

AV
CARL JOHAN GARDELL

De tycktes dyka upp ur intet, de hemlighetsfulla afghanska talibanerna. Högst ett hundratal religiösastudenter genomförde en oväntrat attack och intog den pakistanska gränsstaden Spin Boldak i oktober 1994. Ett år senare svepte en välbeväpnad talibancarmé på åtminstone 25 000 soldater genom det krigshärjade landet i ett veritabelt blitzkrieg. I oktober 1996 chockades världen av reportagen från det erövrade Kabul – ofentliga styrpningar, kvinnor som piskades på gatorna och drakoniska förbud mot musik, tv-tittande och diverse barnleksaker. Könsåtskillnad proklamerades och småflickor förbjöds att gå i skolan. Arbetsplatserna stängdes för kvinnor som inte ens fick vistas uteomhus utan manlig följeslagare. Den religiösa polisen upprättade ett terrorvärde.

Under det senaste året har talibanregimen säkrat kontrollen över cirka 85 procent av Afghanistan. Längst uppe i norr har Nordalliansen – den fördrivna mujaheddinregimen – omgrupperat sina styrkor med bistånd från Ryssland, Iran, Indien och de centralasiatiska republikerna. Enligt larmrapporter från FN-organet UNDCP (United Nations Drug Control Programme) har narkotikahanteringen expanderat dramatiskt under det senaste året och de talibanska delarna av Afghanistan anses nu vara världens största opiumproducent. UNDCP har föreslagit ett biståndsprogram för övergång till alternativgrödor men talibanerna förefaller inte intresserade. Miljardvinsterna från drogeexporten bidrar till att finansiera fortsatt krigsföring och en fredlig lösning på den tjugoförsta konflikten tycks dröja länge än.

Vilka är då talibanerna? Enligt vissa observatörer en rörelse av hängivna muslimska religiösa studenter som tagit till vapen för att rensa landet från de stridande krigsherrarna och upprätta en islamisk stat. Enligt en annan tolkning är talibanerna främst en välrustad militär organisation med fanatiska elittrupper i tjänst hos den pakistanska underrättelsetjänsten ISI (Inter Services Intelligence Directorate) och med finansiellt stöd från två oljebolag – kaliforniska Unocal och saudiarabiska Delta Oil Company. I bakgrunden

skymtar diverse organisationer och en politisk konstellation som vid mitten av 90-talet omfattade Pakistan, USA, Saudi-arabien, Storbritannien och Förenade Arabemiraten. Talibanernas uppdrag skulle vara att pacificera Afghanistan inför byggandet av gas- och oljeledningar till nyupptäckta fynigheter i det forna sovjetiska Centralasien.

För övrigt konstateras att tusentals officerare, kadrer och experter från den störtade prosovjetiska regimen i Kabul – främst från dess pushtunska, dvs lantliga, khalqfälang – tidigt anslöt sig till den växande talibanrörelsen. Andra uppgifter ger vid handen att talibancarmén utevecklats till en kriminell organisation i takt med att narkotikahanteringen expanderat och landet blivit en lukrativ frizon för internationella maffiasyndikat. Bedömningarna går isär och många frågor pockar på svar.

En nyutkommen samlingsvolym med titeln *Fundamentalism Reborn? Afghanistan and the Taliban* (253 s; Hurst & Co) ger en mångsidig och faktaspäckad översikt över det afghanska dramat. Bokens redaktör är Afghanistanexperten William Maley, verksam vid University of New South Wales i Australien. Ett dussin framträdande forskare medverkar med artiklar och ger olika infallsvinklar på en av vår tids största tragedier.

Redan 1898 uppmärksammade Winston Churchill (i "Striden om Malahand") de kringvandrande religiösa studenter som av tradition åtnjöt fritt uppehälle hos befolkningen. De tillhörde muslimska internatskolor – madrasas – och kallas talibar (sing talib). Madrasainstitutionerna ingår i byggnadskomplex som förutom moskéer kan omfatta sjukhus, härbärge, affärslokaler och förvaltningskontor. I de lantliga regionerna i södra Afghanistan och angränsande områden i Pakistan – North West Frontier Province och Baluchistan – har länge funnits ett pärlband av små madrasas som drivs i lokala mullors regi. När mer än två miljoner afghaner flydde över gränsen på 80-talet fick pakistanska madrasas en central roll som flyktingcentra och regelrätta

militärbaser för motståndsrörelsen (mujaheddin). Tusentals utarmade och föräldralösa småpojkar erbjöds gratis utbildning och kunde växa upp på internaten. Dessa blivande talibar har alltså formats av flyktingskapet – och de extremt asketiska traditioner (deobandiskolan) som sedan 1800-talet haft en stark ställning inom islam på den indiska kontinenten. Deobandis har uppmärksammats för sin konsekventa könssegregation och motstånd mot moderniseringstendenser i samhället. När talibanernas främstlärare – mulla Mohammad Omar – fick en uppenbarelse stöd dessa vår tids munksoldater redo att gå ut i krig för att fullfölja ett godomligt uppdrag och återerövra förfädernas land.

Amin Saikal, verksam vid Australian National University, redar ut händelseförloppet under de kaotiska åren 1992–97 och den sönderfallsprocess som ledde fram till talibanernas framträdande. I april 1992 bröt den prosovjetiska Najibullah-regimen samman sedan det ryska biståndsförbundet stoppats och den uzbekiske generalen Abdul Rashid Dostum gått över till mujaheddin med sina trupper. Den 24 april samma år ingick de sju väststödda befrielserörelserna ett avtal i den pakistanska staden Peshawar och man upprättade en provisorisk samlingsregering som efter två år planerade att genomföra allmänna val. Koalitionens tongivande parti var det tadzjikdominerade Jamiat-e Islami, lett av den blivande presidenten Burhanuddin Rabbani och krigsherren Ahmad Shah Massoud vars trupper kontrollerade merparten av Kabul.

Peshawaravtalet bröt dock omedelbart samman. Den pushtunska mujaheddinrörelsen Hezb-e Islami – led av Gulbuddin Hekmatyar – vägrade att samarbeta och inleddes i stället ett anfall mot Kabul. Angreppet slogs tillbaka av Massouds trupper, men Hezbmilisen påbörjade från sina ställningar en artilleribeskjutning som efter två år hade åsamkat Kabul en i det närmaste total förödelse. Först när talibancarmén inlett sin offensiv tvingades Hekmatyar att avbryta konfrontationstaktiken och nära sig Rabbani-regimen.

De kämpande mujaheddinfaktionerna tycktes sakna intresse för nationell försoning och fredlig maktdelning. Varje parti åtnjöt regionalt stöd, skriver Saikal, baserat på

etnisk identifikation och klantillhörighet. Under det tioåriga motståndet mot sovjetisk ockupation och den prokomunistiska Kabulregimen hade varje milis fört ett eget separat krig och värnat sin regionala autonomi. Mujaheddinrörelserna bekämpade följkärtligen också varandra, även om det sovjetiska hotet tjänstgjorde som enande faktor. Efter den ryska reträtten 1988-89 fanns inget som kunde hålla krigsherrarna samman.

Den främsta drivkraften bakom sönderfallsprocessen var dock, skriver Saikal, det utländska biståndet. Hekmatyars Hezb finansierades av Pakistan genom underrättelsetjänsten ISI och inrikesministeriet. Saudiariabien subsidierflödade till en annan pushtunmilis - Ittehad-e Islami - och dess ledare Abdul-Rab al-Rasul Sayyaf. Det shiitiska partiet Hezb-e Wahdat stöddes av den iranska regimen. Mujaheddinrörelserna kan faktiskt beskrivas som legotrupper i utländska makters tjänst. Konflikterna i Afghanistan speglade skiftande internationella maktkonstellationer i den främreasiatiska regionen.

Rabbaniregeringens tillkomst och Peshawaravtalet var i själva verket ett förkrossande nederlag för Pakistan. Följaktligen gav ISI order till "sin" krigsherre Hekmatyar att obstruera samarbetsavtalet och i stället inleda en militär offensiv. Men Hezbmilisen körde fast vid Kabul och 1994 hade Hekmatyars ställning allvarligt försvagats. Det var i det läget som pakistanierna satsade på ett nytt kort - talibanerna.

Antropologen M Nazif Shahrani, verksam vid Indiana University (USA), ger en historisk översikt med tonvikt på Afghanistans utländska beroende. Under 1800-talet stod landet på randen till sammanbrott när ryska tsartrupper expanderade i Centralasien och britterna utvidgade sitt indiska imperium norrut. I två angloafghanska krig - 1838-42 och 1878-79 - slogs dock britterna tillbaka av de afghanska stamkrigarna som gynnades av den oländiga terrängen. Under 1800-talets sista decennier pacificerades landet i stället av emiren Abdul Rahman Khan med finansiellt bistånd och vapenleveranser från Storbritannien. Från den tiden, skriver Shahrani, har de successiva afghanska regimerna baserat sin maktutövning på flödet av utländska subsidier. Landets skattebas är helt enkelt otillräcklig, främst beroende på att staten aldrig förmått knäcka de tusentals - lokala och regionala - klanernas uråldriga autonomi. I stället utvecklade den härskande durraniätten ett beskyddarskaps- och klient-system som knöt stamkonfederationerna och klanerna till staten med hjälp av det utländska subsidieflödet.

Under hela 1900-talet har regimerna i Kabul följkärtligen spelat ut successiva stormakter mot varann. Redan på 20-talet blev Sovjetunionen en av de främsta finansiärerna och 1947 övertog det självständiga Pakistan de retirerande britternas engagemang. Det växande västbiståndet till mujaheddin efter den sovjetiska invasionen 1979 länkades in i de traditionella beskyddarskapsystemen. Under kriget 1979-89 stegrades i realiteten klanledarnas autonomi när de västliga nätverken kunde spelas ut mot de sovjetiska.

Mellanösterexperten Anwar-ul-Haq Ahady kartlägger stormaktsspelet och de kaleidoskopiskt skiftande allianser som under de senaste decennierna påverkat Afghanistankonflikten. Det kalla krigets logik gjorde amerikanska CIA till en av mujaheddins främsta supportrar enligt tumregeln "vår fiendes fiende är vår vän". Det saudiska biståndet avsåg bland annat att skapa en maktbas i den iranska konkurrentens flank. Vid decennieskifftet 1990 förlorade dock Afghanistan sin centrala roll i det globala maktspellet sedan det iransk-irakiska kriget upphört (1988). Sovjetunionen retirerat och supermarktkonflikten gick mot sin upplösning. Även Saudiariabien avvecklade sitt engagemang 1991 sedan de flesta mujaheddinrörelserna valt att stödja Irak i gulfkriget. Vintern 1991-92 sinade de ryska och amerikanska subsidieflödena och det sönderslagna Afghanistan lämnades åt sitt öde.

Redan 1994 skulle bilden förändras på nytt. I de nyligen självständiga centralasiatiska republikerna upptäcktes fabulösa olje- och gasreserver i ett vidsträckt bälte från Kazakstan i öster till Azerbajdzjan och Kaspiska havet i väster. Optimistiska experter kalkylerade med fyndigheter som ansågs överträffa Mellanösterns. Samtidigt uppmärksammades det

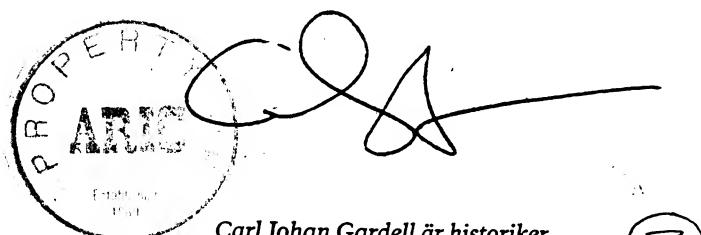
hastigt stegrade energibehovet i Kina och de sydostasiatiska tillväxtekonomierna. Ett internationellt konsortium skapades med oljebolagen Unocal och Delta Oil som främsta intressenter och avsikten var att bygga gas- och oljepipelinor genom Afghanistan till hamnterminaler på den pakistanska kusten. Sedan exploateringsavtalet tecknats återstod problemet med att pacificera det kaotiska Afghanistan.

Pakistanska ISI och konsortiet bakom "The Afghan Pipeline Project" hade tappat förtroendet för Hezbmilisen. Hekmatyar var den kabuliska maktkampens förlorare och hade dessutom knutit nya kontakter med Iran. Rabbaniregimen närmade sig alltmer Ryssland, Iran och Indien och kontrurerna till ett nytt allianssystem kunde skönjas. Vid den kritiska tidpunkten, hävdar Afghanistanexperten Richard Mackenzie, erbjöd sig mullorna i talibanernas styrande *shura* att röja väg för de planerade rörledningsnäten ända upp till den turkmenistanska gränsen. Inom kort steg talibanmilisen upp som en komet på den afghanistanska himlen. Samtidigt kollapsade Hekmatyars milis sedan subsidieflödet omdirigerats till den nya maktfaktorn.

Talibanerna är på intet sätt en radikal islamisk rörelse, konstaterar islamexpert Olivier Roy. Tvärtom kan man tala om en häpnadsväckande effektiv militär organisation och dödsföraktande tappra elitsoldater. Talibanerna kan beskrivas som extrema pushtunationalister och ultratraditionalister som inte har något till övers för den radikala islamismen i Iran och arabvärlden. Roy lanserar begreppet neofundamentalism för ett parti som med terrorns hjälp vill införa en drakonisk shariaglagstiftning och vrida samhället tillbaka till förmodern tid. De reaktionära mullorna i pushtunska madrasas har ingen förståelse för de revolutionära samhällsexperiment som förespråkats av ayatollah Khomeini och den egyptiske teoretikern Sayyid Qutbs skola. Med hjälp av sin nationalistiska agenda förmår talibanerna dessutom locka till sig pushtuner från alla politiska och ideologiska läger. Sammanfattningsvis kan Roy konstatera att den moderna islamismen misslyckats i Afghanistan. Säväl konservativa klanhövdingar som den störtade kommunistregimens anhängare - i synnerhet dess pushtunska khalqfraktion - tycks ha funnit en tillflyktsort under talibanernas ultranationalistiska paraly.

Utväcklingen under 1997 har gjort talibanregimen till en het potatis för rörelsens tolda sponsorer. Uppdraget att pacificera hela landet led ett allvarligt avbräck i maj 1997 när talibanarmén drabbades av ett förkrossande nederlag vid den strategiskt viktiga staden Mazar-e Sharif. Den reorganiserade Nordalliansen står starkare än någonsin norr om Hindukush. Talibanerna erbjöd sig också att utrota vallmoodlingen men har i stället inlett samarbete med mäktiga maffiasyndikat och stimulerat produktionen av opium och heroin. Det groteska förtrycket av kvinnor och övergrepp mot FN-representanter och biståndsarbetare har gjort talibanregimen till en paria bland världens regeringar. Vid ett besök i Pakistan i november 1997 tog den amerikanske utrikesministern Madeleine Albright skarpt avstånd från talibanernas behandling av landets kvinnor. I april 1998 ingrep USA:s FN-ambassadör Bill Richardson med ett initiativ för att få de stridande afghaniska parterna till förhandlingsbordet. "The Afghan Pipeline Project" tycks ha gått i baklås i väntan på nya maktförskjutningar i det sargade landet.

Talibanernas samhällsexperiment lär inte bli framgångsrikt och bestående. Inte ens Pol Pots röda khmerer förmådde vrida klockan tillbaka till medeltiden.



Dashtaq - byn



Lars Granström och Ingrid Andersson är båda sjuksköterskor på Visby Lasarett. De har under tre veckor arbetat för Svenska Afghanistankommittén i det jordbävningsdrabbade nordöstra Afghanistan. Deras arbete var att samordna den svenska hjälpen och planera för kommitténs återuppbyggningsarbete. Lars har arbetat i Afghanistan tidigare under flera år och talar persiska. Här är deras intryck från en av de värst drabbade byarna.



FRAMTIDEN - JA, VI VET INTE. "Vi vill inte lämna hembygden, men vi kan inte bo kvar här heller." Några av de överlevande männen är samlade på ruinhögarna och resonerar därpå om framtiden. "Det finns risk för nya jordbävningar och sedan är floden upp och ned. Vi har inte råd att bygga upp hela området om floden kommer att släcka om flera stora dammar. När dammarna blir tillräckligt tydla finns risken att de brister och en flodvåg kommer ett skjuts med sig hela distansen." "Vi försöker gräva upp takstocorna från de gamla husen för att kunna bygga nya, men var ska vi bygga? Ingen av oss har några pengar, allt vi ägde finns där", en av männen pekar uppifvet mot lersätten. "Nu har det gått tre veckor och vi har inte fått någon hjälp utifrån. Jo, förrösten vi har fått 100 tält till 500 familjer och litet vete, men det räcker inte när man inte har näckonting kvar."

som försvann



- JAG KASTADES OMKULL. "Jag var på åkern och plöjde, klockan var elva på förmiddagen när jordbävningen kom. Hela marken stod och det var svårt att hålla sig i foten, berättar Khal Mohammed. "Jag hörde ett väldigt oväsen från byn och kom till byn. Byn fällsammis med några andra som plöjde i närområdet. När vi kom till byggnäcket fanns byn fäddt i ingenting, det syntes ingenting, hela byn var borta och det var så tydigt. Bergens på hängde sidor av byn hade bara rasat ner över byn. Vi sprang ner och försökte grava fram våra hus med händerna, alla våra verktyg var inne i husen, men vi visste inte ens var vi skulle grava det var ju bara lera och åter lera."

Tårarna kommer fram i Khal Mohammeds ögon och han tittar bort när han fortsettar.

"Hepta min familj var i huset, min fru och alla fem barn och altit jag äger och har, nu har bara kilderna jag står i. Jag gick till Gud och han ska ta mitt liv också, för jag har förlorat altit. Och kanske gör han det - förta natten var det två kraftiga jordskälv igen."



SKALVET TOG 122 ELEVER. Här låg byns skola. Det var en vanlig skoldag när jordskälet kom. 122 elever och 6 lärare var i skolan. I moskén som låg bredvid var det 10 elever som hade undervisning av mullen. Jordbävningen begravde samtliga. De ligger nu begravda under flera meter lera och omkullfallna lerväggar. Flaggorna visar var de döda ligger.



PÅ VÄG – MED VETE. Ingrid Andersson i en Röda Kors-helikopter på väg ut med vete och mat till isolerade byar. Till vänster i bild syns en bil som har fått sitta på landet det är fint veder. Vagen tar två timmar och går mest i floddalen. När det är natt blir den obrankomlig. Veckorna efter jordbävningen har det regnat mer än det brukar, så byn har varit helt isolerad. FN och Röda Korset har försökt få ut hjälp, mat och presentningar med helikoptrar, men även de blev stoppade när det regnade.

ENDA FÄRDSÄTTET – ÅSNAN. När inte helikoptrarna eller bilarna kommer fram så är åsnan den enda som kommer fram. Åsnekaravaner är det traditionella sättet att få varor från byarna till marknaden och tillbaka. Men det är inte otroligt. Två man och fyra åsnor dog när en karavan gick med vete till högt belägna byar. De skulle korsa en hangbro som rasade.



1 500 PERSONER BEGRAVDES I LERAN. Dashtaq var innan jordbävningen en by med drygt 3.000 invånare. Det är en fattig by, där hälften på 2.000 medan hälften är flera lever på får och getter och i varje familj är det oftast en man som arbetar och den driftdarbetare på de bördiga fältet i Talqoon och Kundus på sommaren. Den 30:e maj klockan 10.53 förändrades allt. En stor jordbävning skakade nordöstra Afghanistan. Hela byn, mer än 1.500 männskor begravdes i leran.

Sidaapionjär konsulteras på andra sidan sundet

SVD 20/7 - 98



Foto: OWE SJÖBLÖM

Praktisk hjälp. Carl Schönmeyr var med och startade Svenska Afghanistankom-
mittén i början av 80-talet efter den ryska invasionen. Han lyckades föra in åsne-
karavener med sjukvårdare och mediciner till de nödställda.

Namn: Carl Schönmeyr

Födelse: 70 den 1 i augusti

Fyli: har arbetat med bi-
stånd inom Sida och Uni-
cet sedan 1960

Borrar på Sveavägen i Stock-
holm

Familj: två vuxna döttrar
och lilla barnbarnet Yas-
min, nyss fyldt 6 år

Funderar på: en bok om
sitt händelsrika liv

Carl Schönmeyr är en
svensk apionjär inom
svenska bistånd-
arbetet med mer än
trettio år inom Sida

och Unicef.
– Mitt jobb har varit mitt sto-
ra intresse, säger han och ut-
strålar både entusiasm och entu-
siasm.

Han har definitivt inte slutat
arbeta trots att han fyller 70 år.

Mycket av hans tid går åt till
Svenska Afghanistankomittén
där han fortfarande är vice ord-
förande och führer som råd-
givare.

– Kommittén är i dagsläget

den största frivilligorganisationen

som finns i Afghanistan,

– 1990 såg han en plats-
annons från den däva-
tionsen Centralkommittén
för svenska tekniskt bistånd till

men frågan är hur länge vi kan
stanna här handlar.

– Jag har hittills inte fått se
dagenär har talit om att Sida
ordrat alla biståndsorganisatio-
ner utom FN och Röda korset
att lämna Kabul, vilket innebar
enorma svårigheter för den fat-
tiga befolkningen eftersom FN
är veronome av rörlingsorganisa-
tionerna för att hjälpen ska
nå fram.

– Tillbancerna tycks sakna
både politisk och administrativ

kompetens, särskilt i fråga om
internationella politiska regler.

Situationen blir inte bättre av
att en stor del av intelligensian
redan lämnat landet.

Sina barnmått tillbringade Carl
Schönmeyr först i Warszawa
där fadern arbetade som bank-
man inom Kreuger-koncernen,
men 1934 flyttade familjen ida-
re till Paris. När kriget brot ut
stekades den väravarige Carl till
Sverige och innehavskolani

Sigtuna, där han tog studenten
examen med toppbetyg. Däreft-
ter följde civilekonomexamen,
jur kand-examen och tige-
tjänstgöring.

– Sedan följde några år som
befolkningsanställdare på Sida
i Stockholm och som rådgivare

till den internationella organi-
sationen ICOM, International
Council on Management Popu-
lation Programs, med bideg-
bla från FN:s befolkningstjänst.

Med sin långa erfarenhet tung-
rade han som rådgivare och
reste mycket till olika medlems-
länder i Sydostasien.

De senaste åren, efter pen-
sionen från Sida i 1993, har han
haft konsulteringsuppdrag för det
danska utrikesministeriet vilket
resulterat i en rapport om Uni-
cets insatser inom tre områden:

svåra omständigheter (trig-
barnbete och prostitution)
och södt till kvinnors häsa.

Danskarna ser därna ett mer
pålitande Unicef som inte
värjer för de kontroversiella
frågorna, en inställning som

mindre utvecklade områden, en
folkförstådesverkets föregångare
i Sida, som sökte en fört se-
kretarie. Han intervjuades av

chefen Sixten Heppings och
om Sixten Heppings planjör-
a och kunskaper och smitande
entusiasmen. En man med ett
stort intresserat engagemang,

– Han har varit min mentor.

Carl Schönmeyr talar gärna
om Sixten Heppings planjör-
a och kunskaper och smitande
entusiasmen. En man med ett
stort intresserat engagemang,

– Han har varit min mentor.

När Sida startade 1963
blev Carl Schönmeyr
betydelsefull, senare av

delningskretsen, hanster som
han ofta varit tjänstledig från
hant kungliga arbete på Fal-
tet, främst i Unicefs regi som
representant i bl.a Afghanistan,
Mellersta östen, Pakistan och

Indien.

– Sedan följde några år som
befolkningsanställdare på Sida
i Stockholm och som rådgivare

till den internationella organi-
sationen ICOM, International
Council on Management Popu-
lation Programs, med bideg-
bla från FN:s befolkningstjänst.

Med sin långa erfarenhet tung-
rade han som rådgivare och
reste mycket till olika medlems-
länder i Sydostasien.

De senaste åren, efter pen-
sionen från Sida i 1993, har han
haft konsulteringsuppdrag för det

danska utrikesministeriet vilket
resulterat i en rapport om Uni-
cets insatser inom tre områden:

svåra omständigheter (trig-
barnbete och prostitution)

och södt till kvinnors häsa.

Danskarna ser därna ett mer
pålitande Unicef som inte
värjer för de kontroversiella
frågorna, en inställning som

Pakistan och Iran har inlett ett försök att medla fred i det krigsdrabbade Afghanistan. Representanter för de två rivalisande muslimska länderna reste i veckan tillsammans för att möta inhördeskrigets parter i Afghanistan. TT-AFP

SVD 5/7-98

Talibane erövrade provinsen

AFGHANISTAN. Den afghanska talibanska milisen uppgav sig på söndagen ha erövrat den strategiskt viktiga provinsen Faryab i den nordvästra delen av landet.

En talesman för det talibanska informationsdepartementet i Kabul sade att hela provinsen erövrats och att trupperna knappt mött något motstånd. Han sade att motståndarsidan flydde hals över huvud och lämnade efter sig nästan all utrustning. Talibane är nu på marsch mot nästa provins, Jowzjan, sade talesmannen.

Tidigare hade den privatägda afghanska nyhetsjänsten AIP i Pakistan rapporterat att talibane inagit Faryabs provinshuvudstad Maimana. TT-AFP

Hårda strider i Afghanistan

DN 14/7-98

AFGHANISTAN. Hårda strider rasade på måndagen i nordvästra Afghanistan mellan talibane styrkor och oppositionen.

Den talibanske befälhavaren Mullah Abdul Muttmayan sade från sitt högkvarter i provinsen Kandahar att offensiven är riktad mot Jozjanprovinss och dess huvudort Shebergan. Där har rebelledaren Rashid Dostam sitt högkvarter.

I söndags intog talibane grannprovinss Faryab. Uppgiften har bekräftats av västerländska källor. Talibane kontrollerar 85 procent av Afghanistan och har där infört sin egen stränga tolkning av islam. AP

Talibane offensiv hejdat

AFGHANISTAN. Talibane offensiv i nordvästra Afghanistan har hejdat, uppgav oppositionen på tisdagen.

Hårda strider har rasat de senaste dagarna i nordväst och den talibanske befälhavaren Mullah Abdul Muttmayan sade i måndags att offensiven är riktad mot Jozjanprovinss och dess huvudort Shebergan. Där har rebelledaren Rashid Dostam sitt högkvarter.

– Vi har hejdat dem och skurit av alla vägar från Maimana till Jozjan, sade en anonym oppositionstalesman.

Maimana är huvudstad i grannprovinss Faryab, som talibane intog i söndags. Det var talibane största militära framgång i denna del av landet. De drevs ut därifrån i maj 1997. DN 15/7-98 AP

FN hotar bryta hjälp till Afghanistan

SVD
15/7-98

Kabul: FN håller på att tappa tålamodet med talibane regim i Afghanistan och kan komma att dra bort sina humanitära hjälpprojekt från landet. Det sade FN:s speciella sändebud i Afghanistan Lakhda Brahimi på tisdagen.

– Pressen ökar på oss, i synnerhet från givarländerna, att säga att det finns en gräns för vad vi kan stå ut med, sade Brahimi efter ett möte med FN:s säkerhetsråd i New York.

Brahimi sade att talibane så gott som dagligen kommer med nya påbud som kränker de mänskliga rättigheter. Tidigare dagen hade utländska hjälparbetare fått ett ultimatum av de talibanske myndigheterna att flytta in i förfallna byggnader i staden eller lämna landet.

På fredag startar FN-diskussioner på hög nivå om den humanitära situationen i Afghanistan. Ett beslut att dra sig ur det fatti och krigshärjade landet skulle vara mycket kontroversiellt, eftersom det skulle slå hårt mot redan utsatta mänsklor. TT-AFP

Mer läsning:
Vilka är talibane?
Kultur, 12-13

FN hotar avbryta hjälp till Afghanistan

SVD 16/7-98

KABUL, TT-AFP

► Förhållandet mellan internationella hjälpporgan och den radikalt islamiska regimen i Afghanistan hotas av totalt sammanbrott. FN kan komma att dra sig ur landet, vilket skulle ställa massor av mänsklor utan livsnödvändigt bistånd.

– Vi är på väg mot en totalkonfrontation och offret för den blir biståndet till Kabul, sade en källa i biståndskretsar på onsdagen.

Talibane regim har anklagat hjälpporganisationerna för suspekta aktiviteter och en långvarig konflikt råder kring kvinnors tillgång till hälsovård.

Nu har läget blivit akut genom att hjälpporganen uppmanats att flytta sina kontor till förfallna byggnaderna i huvudstadens före detta tekniska högskola. Omkring 30 organisationer har fått ultimatum och måste svara ja senast på söndag eller lämna landet.

Delokaler som påtvingas bi-

ständarsabtarna har varken vatten, el eller fönster och reparationskostnaderna, som beräknas till motsvarande ca åtta miljoner kronor, måste biståndsorganen stå för själva.

Ordern om förflyttning ska ha kommit från talibaneledaren själv, mullah Mohammed Omar, och är därför inte förhandlingsbar enligt hjälparbetare.

Försvarar för kvinnor

Källor inom bla FN och Internationella rödakorskommitén uppger att hälsovårdsdepartementet i Kabul nu gjort det närmast omöjligt för afghanska kvinnor att arbeta lagligt inom sjukvården.

I tisdags sade FN:s speciella sändebud i Afghanistan, Lakhda Brahimi, att FN håller på att tappa tålamodet med talibane regim. Världsorganisationen kan till och med komma att dra bort sina humanitära hjälpprojekt från landet, enligt Brahimi.

EU stryper bistånd till Afghanistan

SVD

19/7-98

Bryssel: EU-kommissionen avbröt i går omedelbart alla humanitära biståndsprojekt i den afghanistanska huvudstaden Kabul. Det sade en tjänsteman inom kommissionen på lördagen. Beslutet földe på den islamistiska talibane-rörelsens krav att flera stora biståndsorganisationer ska flytta sina kontor till den sonderskjutna före detta tekniska högskolan i utkanten av staden. Anläggningen har varken fönster, el eller vatten. Talibane ledningen har krävt att biståndsorganisationerna flyttar på söndagen eller lämnar landet. TT-REUTERS

Talibane i hårdare strider

DN 21/7-98

AFGHANISTAN. Talibane utkämpar åter hårdare strider med oppositionen i norra Afghanistan. Under helgen gick oppositionen till offensiv mot talibane ställningar i provinsen Faryab.

För en vecka sedan uppgav talibane, som kontrollerar 85 procent av landet, ha vunnit en viktig seger mot oppositionens styrkor nära de intog Faryab.

Framgången var talibane största på ett år.

En oppositionstalesman uppgav för nyhetsbyrån AP att oppositionen återerövrat den strategiska orten Qay Sar i Faryab, vilket talibanea bestrider.

Området är mycket otillgängligt och det är svårt att kontrollera parternas uppgifter.

Västkällor uppgav att talibanea fortfarande kontrollerar provinshuvudstaden Maimana, men att staden utsätts för hård artillerield.

AP

De islamistiska talibanaerna tog makten i Afghanistan 1996 och sedan dess för de – i islamens namn – krig mot vad de uppfattar som Afghanistans gudlöshet. Med järnband styr och kontrollerar de allt liv i delar av landet, och mänskliga rättigheter är ett för länge sedan glömt begrepp.

Huvudstaden Kabul är sedan tiden under sovjetinvandringen, syndernas näste, i talibanaernas ögon. I kampen mot gudlöstheten och i förvarandet av den "kvinnliga hedern" känner talibanaernas vidriga maktutövande inga gränser.

Kvinnona får inte längre gå i skola, och i hemmen skall de få moralundervisning.

Kvinorna osnyliggörs bakom sina burkar. Inte ens ögonen får synas bakom det absolut heltäckande klädesplagget. En blottad vrist eller härlöst leder till bestraffning. Bakom anstötstatten är det svårt att andas och svårt att se ut.

Männen tvingas att anlägga skägg. Minst en näve längst skall det vara.

Nyigen förbjuds innehav av TV- och videoparapparater. Sedan tidiagare är underhållning i form av musikkassetter och fil-

När skäggen bestämmer

Arbete Nyhetsma 22/7-98

mer också förbjudet och att offentligt spela föjör eller att klappa takten till musik är inte att tänka på.

Alt liv bevakas av turban-

och skäggö-

klädda män

från sedlighets-

ministeriet.

Situationen

skänns näst-

intill hopplös.

Finns det något

man kan göra för att mänskorna i Af-

ghanistan skall slippa ifrån detta jordens

helvete?

Sedan islamistregimen i förra veckan

krävde att internationell hjälparbetare

skall flytta till särskilda lokaler utanför Kabul, börjar omvärdands missnöje ånyo blossta upp.

bistånd till de av talibanaerna kontrollera-

de områdena.

Diskussioner om tillbakadragande av

humanitärt bistånd för även inom FN

och andra organisationer.

Det är aldrig oproblematiskt att dra in

humanitärt bistånd. Omkring 60

procent av invånarna i Kabul är beroende

av det vatten och den mat och hälsos-

vård som det humanitära biståndorganisa-

tionerna tillhandahåller.

De fattiga och förtryckta mänskorna

med redan läder, kommer att läda ännu

mer utan bistånd.

Men det kan å andra sidan inte vara

rimligt att ge bistånd till en regim som har

infört könspartheid och som helt strun-

ta i alt vad mänskliga rättigheter heter.

Frågan är om ett indragande av biståndet

kan hjälpa till att själva de guidständer

männen från makten.

Kanske är det så att frusna bistånd i kombination med tydliga internationella fördömanden – inte minst från andra muslimska stater – kan hjälpa det afghanistanska folket att få bort ut förtrycket.

Det enda som vi sikert

vet är att som det är nu,

var utvecklingen i Afghani-

stan i alla fall inte framå-



Karin
Sjernfeld

Signerat/Charlotta Friborg

DN

13/7-98

Det barbariska kriget mot kvinnorna

Kriget mot synden har högsta prioritet i Afghanistan. Den fundamentalistiska talibana-regimen har förbjudit tevetittande, musik, fotografering, kontakt med utlämningar, västerländskt klädedräkt, homoseksualitet, nagel-lack, ja till och med burfläckar och barnens dräkter. Brott mot lagarna straffas hårt. Amnesty International rapporterar om amputa-tioner, tortyr, dödstraff och fängslande av olikartade.

Men det mest barbariska kriget mot det egna folket förs mot kvinnorna. När talibana-erna erövrade de södra delarna av Afghanistan 1996 hälsade det krigströta folket dem som befriare. Efter 20 år av krig, konflikter, förödelse och intrent kunde hoppades man på lugn och stabilitet. Den västra anarki upphörde visserligen, men det stod nästan omedelbart klart att talibana-regimens lugn byggde på omfattande politisk repres-sion, sträng koran-torngans rättsskipning och på ett fruktansvärt kvinnoförtryck.

Talibana-erna har förbjudit flickor att gå i skolan. Kvinnor tvingas bärta heltäckande traditionell klädedräkt, och den som pryter mot reglerna riskerar spöstraff. Kvinnor får inte heller arbeta utanför hemmet, utom i med-icinska yrken. Syftet med detta förtryck är en-ligt talibana-erna att förvara kvinnornas är-barhet.

Merparten av talibana-erna kommer från landsbygden eller från flyktinglägren i Paki-stan. De flesta har ingen amman utbildning än den islamistiska indoctrineringen de fått i koranskolorna. Huvudstaden Kabul ses av dem som syndens främsta hemvist och det är också där förtrycket är värst.

Tidskriften Newsweek rapporterar i sitt



Burkas är den klädedräkt som den talibana-nska regeringen påbjuder för kvinnor.

senaste nummer om hur patruller utsända av regimen därrar omkring i bilar på Kabuls gator för att se till att invånarna följer de senaste påbuden. Det är dock inte alltid så lätt att veta exakt vad som är förbjudet. Talibana-erna är därför detaljerna läggarna och lev-nadsreglerna från dag till annan.

Lugnet som talibana-erna skapat är emellertid ett lugn på ytan. Talibana-erna behärskar i dag två tredjedelar av Afghanistan, men i norr pagar fortfarande strider mot opposi-

tionella grupper. Fredsamtalen som skulle ägt rum i Pakistan i våras bröt samman innan de ens hann börja.

Mot denna bakgrund är talibana-regimens lovordande av Pakistans kärnvapenprov synnerligen skrämmande. "Viceministern i talibana-ernas ministerium för främjande av dygden och undertryckande av synd" har förklarat att kärnvapen är ett mycket tillförlitligt vapen i försvaret mot de otrogna och att hans regering önskar sig ett sådant vapen", skriver ambassadör Lars Norberg i Moderna Tider. Han fortsätter: "En ekalerander kärnvapenprästur i Sydasiens kan i värlä- den fått början på en okontrollerad kärnvapenpridning till andra delar av världen – ja också till renna gangsterregimer."

Afghanistan är en av Asiens värsta konflikt-hårdar. Världssamfundet måste öka pressen för att få de stridande parterna till seriösa förhandlingar. Det svenska biståndet som kanaliseras via frivilligorganisationer är av stor betydelse för att bygga upp informella skolor och andra typer av institutioner på landsbygden, där talibana-ernas grepp om befolkningen är något svagare. Internationella insatser för att stärka de moderata krafterna i Afghanistan är nödvändiga, innan världen fatt åhnsi en stat med tillgång till kärnvapen på halsen.

Charlotta Friborg

Medarbetare på ledarredaktionen.

UN 21/7-98
Bistånds-
arbetare
mördade i
Afghanistan

Från TT/AFP

KABUL Två afghanska biståndsarbetare hittades i helgen mördade sedan de blivit kidnappade i staden Jalalabad i östra Afghanistan, uppgav två FN-organisationer. De båda männen arbetade för FN:s flyktingkommisariat respektive FN:s världslivsmedelsprogram.

En talesman för flyktingkommisariatet sade att han inte visste vilka som låg bakom morden men att en utredning pågick. Morden skedde i en zon som kontrolleras av den islamistiska talibanmilisen.

De styrande talibaneerna i Afghanistan sätter huvudstaden Kabul gjorde på måndagsmorgonen razzior mot biståndskontor och grep lokalpersonal, sedan organisationerna vägrat åtlyda order att flytta till nya lokaler i utkanten av staden.

Biståndskällor i Kabul sade att den islamistiska talibanerörelsen tycktes ha valt ut ett antal biståndsorganisationer, vilkas kontor skulle beslagtas.

Detta är slutet för de utländska frivilligorganisationerna i Kabul, och förmodligen början till slutet för utlänningsarna i största allmänhet, sade Charles MacFadden, chef för frivilligorganisationernas samarbetsorgan Acbar.

De utlänningsarna som arbetar för den franska organisationen Internationell medicinsk hjälp (AMI) hann sätta sig i säkerhet i gryningen innan razzian gjordes, men den afghanska personalen greps och talibaneerna tog lokaler i besittning. Även organisationerna Aktion mot hungern och Solidarités fick sina lokaler och utrustning beslagtagna.

På eftermiddagen trängde en militär talibanstyrka in på EU-kommissionens biståndskontor i Kabul, drev ut personalen och bommade igen byggnaden.

Vi förklarade att vi inte är någon frivilligorganisation och att vi har halvdiplomatisk ställning, men de lyssnade inte på oss, sade en afghansk anställd.

I lördags lämnade EU-kommissionens utländska personal Afghanistan av säkerhetsskäl.

SVT 20/7-98
KABUL, TT/AFP, REUTERS
Verksamheten vid flera internationella biståndsorganisationer i Afghanistans huvudstad Kabul låg på söndagen nära. Detta på grund av den talibanska regimens ultimatum till organisationerna om att flytta in i förfallna byggnader i staden eller lämna landet. En tidsgräns som talibaneerna satt för beslutet löpte ut på söndagen.

Flera humanitära organisationer har stängt sina kontor. De som har stannat kvar i Kabul klagar över att växande antivästerländska stämningar piskas upp av regimen. Talibanejren har anklagat

gat hjälporperationerna för suspekta aktiviteter och en långvarig konflikt råder kring kvinnors tillgång till hälsovården. Detta på grund av den talibanska regimens ultimatum till organisationerna om att flytta in i förfallna byggnader i staden eller lämna landet. En tidsgräns som talibaneerna satt för beslutet löpte ut på söndagen.

Flyttar till Pakistan

I förra veckan uppmanades ett trettiotal organisationer att flytta sina kontor till förfallna byggnaderna i huvudstaden före detta tekniska högskola. Talibaneerna sade då att organisationer som inte följer deras instruktioner blir ansvarig för regimens reaktioner. Flera viktiga biståndsorganisationer har sedan dess flyttat sin utländska personal till grannlandet Pakistan.

Den strikta islamiska talibanejren hävdade att de utländska hjälparbaternas säkerhet och välbefinnande var det som motiverade beslutet. De lokaler som påtvingas biståndsarbetarna har varken vatten, el eller fönster och reparationskostnaderna, som beräknas till motvarande åtta miljoner kronor, måste bilda området som riskfyllt och hjälparetare ser det utvalda området som riskfyllt och sätta en månad har antalet utländska biståndsarbetare i Kabul halverats, och de är nu färre än 100.

FN hotar stoppa hjälp

I tisdags sade FNs speciella sändebud i Afghanistan, Lakh-Brahimi, att världsområden kan komma att dra bort sin humanitära hjälp. Han sade att FN hotar att stoppa hjälparbetet om organisationen inte sätter upp ett projekt.

Biståndspersonal sade att

stora moskéer i fredags dominerades av antivästliga teman. Samtidigt sände den statliga radion ett hafsligt tal av nummer två i talibanejrenas hierarki, mullah Mohammed Rabba ni.

Den talibanska regimen, som kontrollerar två tredjedelar av landet och erövrade Kabul för två år sedan, har uppgett att ordern om förflyttning ska ha kommit från talibaneledaren själv Mohammed Omar och därfor inte är förlängningsbar.

Omkring 60 procent av Kabuls krigströta befolkning är på något sätt beroende av utländskt bistånd.

DN 29 JUNI - 98
Afghanistan

Raketanfall. Fyra personer dödades och flera skadades när raketar på söndagen slog ned i Kabul, i ett av de värsta anfallen mot den afghanska huvudstaden på närmare ett år. Enligt ögonvittnen var det minst tio raketar som träffade staden på förmiddagen. AP

AFGHANISTAN

DN 29 JUNI - 98
Afghanistan

Talibanejren sätter käppar i hijulet för hjälparbetet

UN 23/7-98
FN meddelade i går att världsområdenen avbryter all verksamhet utom "rent livsuppehållande bistånd" i Afghanistans huvudstad Kabul. Åtgärden sker i protest mot talibanejrenas behandling av utländskt biståndspersonal. TT/AFP



■ ■ Att urskiljningslöst och med våld skilja kvinnor från män är talibanernas politik för att göra Afghanistan renlärt och fritt från västliga mönster. Ska världen hjälpa dem?

Vem kan hjälpa i Afghanistan?

AftonBladet

25/7-98

FN HAR DRAGIT NER sin hjälperverksamhet i Afghanistan utom den rent livsuppehållande. Andra organisationer har helt avbrutit sina insatser.

Nu förslår sjukhusen läkare som biståndsorganen betalade. Mediciner börjar saknas. Vattenförsörjning havererar. När teknikerna som skötte pumparna lämnat landet.

Men de olyckliga besluten blev till sist nödvändiga. Ansvaret faller på ledarna för den fundamentalistiska talibanrörelsen. Med talibanerna vid makten i Kabul i två år har världen fått med en regim att göra som förefaller unik i sin ondska.

Deras avsikt har varit att driva ut biståndsarbete, främst för

att många kraftigt reagerat mot talibanernas ytterst grova förfryck av Afghanistans kvinnor.

Att bryta biståndssatsen är alltid ett svårt avgörelse, behövande mänsklig lämnas att sitt öde, medan deras herrar i regeringar och arméer alltid tycks kunna leva vidare i trygghet och välvänd.

Tog avstånd från bojkott

Svenska Afghanistan-kommittén har hittills tagit avstånd från demonstrations- och bojkottpolitik. Kommittén har nått begränsader men aktningsvärda framgångar med att öka antalet flickor i utbildning (över 30 000 i de svenska stödda skolorna), till och med i landsbygdsområden under talibanernas styre.

Det är riktigt att könssegregationen i Afghanistan är en uråldrig samhällsförteelse. Det låter sig sägas att talibanerna egentligen tillämpar patriarkaliska regler i det pashtunska samhället de tillhör, inte islamsk renhet feltskold. Att de mest rabiata antivästliga krafterna kan uppmuntras av biståndsarbetrarnas reträtt.

Hälsosvårdena förbjuds

Men när regimen fysiskt hindrar kvinnor att uppsöka sjukhus, att arbeta utom hemmen och hos biståndsorganen? När absurd hinder staplas, när hälsosvårdena förbjuds att använda avbildningar av mänsklig kroppen för att de är ogrundlaga, vad återstår?

Biståndsgivare kan ha en annan syn än mottagarlandet på till exempel kvinnornas deltaande i samhällslivet. Så länge olika uppfattningar i någon mening kan brytas mot varann eller "tävla", är det försvarbart att slå vakt om bistånd även under det svåraste motstånd.

Men i talibanernas Afghanistan handlar det om att ett system genomförs med diktat och våld för att skilja kvinnornas samhälle från männens, och avvikelse tillåts inte ens i de hovsammaste former.

Om biståndsfolket arbete hjälper mänsklig för dagen men i långa loppet endast bidrar till att läsa in dem i ett väldigt system, då är gränsen nådd för vad som står att utträffa.

Talibanerna bommar igen norskt hjälpkontor

Arbete Nyhetsmedia
27/7-98 OSLO/TT-NTB

● Den norska hjälpsorganisationen Kirkens Nödhjelp tvingades på söndags eftermiddagen stänga sitt kontor i Afghanistan. Landets starkt konservativa muslimska taliban-regim bombade igen både kontoret och de två norska hjälparbetarnas privata bostäder inne i huvudstaden Kabul, rapporterade organisationen i Oslo.

Partner får fortsätta

ingen av hjälparbetarna Toril Borud och Jan Åhlander var då kvar i landet. Borud reste ut i fredags och Åhlander har försökt att få återvända till Afghanistan från Pakistan men fått nej av talibanerna.

Enligt utlandschefen Stein Villumsted får dock Kirkens Nödhjelps lokala partner fortsätta att arbeta.

Träffas i Pakistan

Närmare 40 frivilligorganisationer har nu stoppats av talibanregeringen, enligt uppgift därfor att de har vägrat att låta sig fösas samman i en utbombad skolbyggnad utan vatten, el, tak eller fönster. På tisdag ska de utländska hjälpsorganisationer som verkar i Afghanistan sammanträda i Pakistan för att dryfta en gemensam hållning till restriktionerna. Mötet sker inom ramen för deras paraplyorganisation Acbar.

– Bland våra krav är att vi, om det blir möjligt att arbeta i landet i framtiden, inte ska få några diktat om vad vi ska göra och att vi ska kunna besöka landet och diskutera projekt, sade Stein Villumsted.

Talibaner fullbordar utvisning

Kabul: Talibaniska milispatruller fullbordade på tisdagen stängningen av utländska ickestatliga biståndsorganisationer. Ytterligare ett antal utländska hjälparbetare lämnade landet. Bland dem som drabbades på tisdagen var franska Läkare utan gränser. Hittills har närmare 20 organisationer tvingats sluta sin verksamhet i Kabul och andra talibankontrollerade delar av Afghanistan, sedan de vägrat att flytta sina kontor till den utbombade före detta skolbyggnad i Kabul dit talibanerna hävdat dem.

Den föreslagna gemensamma biståndsbyggnaden saknar el och vatten och kostnaden för upprustningen skulle uppgå till cirka åtta miljoner kronor; en summa som biståndsorganisationerna själva skulle få stå för. TT-AFP-SD 22/7-98

Tidsfrist från FN

Sedan frivilligorganisationerna kastats ut är det bara FN och Röda korset som fortfarande får operera i de delar av Afghanistan som talibanerna styr. Efter att ha beskyllts för eftergivenhet mot den fundamentalistiska talibanregimen satte FN nyligen hårt mot hårt. Världsorganisationen gav då talibanerna en frist till slutet av augusti att dra tillbaka sitt dekret om att tvinga ut frivilligrörelserna. De måste också klargöra sin syn på diskrimineringen av kvinnor, som varken tillåts att arbeta eller att få hjälp eller undervisning.

Förlorar bistånd

Fram till dess lämnar FN bara livsnödvändigt bistånd. FN har för talibanerna understrukit att mellan två tredjedelar och tre fjärdedelar av den internationella hjälpen kommer från frivilligorganisationerna och att FN inte ämnar fylla ut tomrummet efter dem.

Tidningarna i Kabul har enligt Villumsted bagatelliserat åtgärden att kasta ut frivilligorganisationerna och har deklarerat att "vi litar på Gud och på FN".

Talibanerna slog till mot biståndskontor

Kabul: De styrande talibanerna i Afghanistans huvudstad Kabul gjorde på måndagsmorgonen razzior mot biståndskontor och grep lokalanställd personal, sedan organisationerna vägrat åtlyda order att flytta till nya lokaler i utkanten av staden. Biståndskällor i Kabul sade att den islamistiska talibanrörelsen tycktes ha valt ut ett antal biståndsorganisationer, vilkas kontor skulle beslagtas.

De drabbade organisationerna är Internationell medicinsk hjälp (AMI), Aktion mot hungern och Solidarité som fick sina lokaler och utrustning beslagtagna.

En talibanstyrka trängde sig även in på EU-kommissionens biståndskontor i Kabul, drev ut personalen och bommade igen byggnaden. I lördags lämnade EU-kommissionens utländska personal Afghanistan av säkerhetsskäl, sedan talibanerna anklagat EU-kommissionären för humanitära frågor, Emma Bonino, för att utnyttja biståndet för kristen propaganda. Två afghanska biståndsarbete hittades i helgen mördade sedan de blivit kidnappade i staden Jalalabad i östra Afghanistan, uppgav två FN-organisationer.

De båda männen arbetade för FN:s flyktingkommisariat respektive FN:s världslivsmedelsprogram. En talesman för flyktingkommisariatet sade att han inte visste vilka som låg bakom morden men att en utredning pågick. Morden skedde i en zon som kontrolleras av talibanerna. TT-AFP

SD 24/7-98

Tv-apparat otillåtet näje i Afghanistan

SD

3d/7-98 KABUL, TT-AFP, AP ► Välbekräpnade talibanska milisgrupper gick på torsdagen runt i den afghanska huvudstaden Kabul och slog sönder tv- och videoapparater.

Enligt ögonvittnen spärrade ambulerande enheter från departementet för främjandet av dygd och undertryckande av synd av ett kvarter i centrum av staden, där de gjorde razzior i affärer och bar iväg eller krossade de otillåtna elektroniska apparater de kunde hitta.

– Det är svårt att argumentera mot dem, kommenterade en handelsman som just tvingats lämna ifrån sig en tv-apparat och en videobandspelare till ett par automatvapenförsedda milismän.

På en gata sågs talibane slänga ut tv-apparater från en balkong på andra våningen.

Koranen enda näjet

En talesman för dygdedepartementet sade att razzian varit framgångsrik. Redan innan man ens börjat göra husundersökningar i bostäder hade man fått fram mer än 100 olagliga tv-apparater.

Torsdagens aktion gör slut på alla spekulationer om att talibanerna skulle kunna tänka sig att tillåta vissa typer av tv-program. Talibanerna har, i sin strävan att göra Afghanistan

till världens mest renodlat muslimska land, förbjudit alla näjen utom högläsning av Koranen.

Smugglingen av bland annat tv-apparater från länderna vid Persiska viken via Afghanistan till Pakistan kommer dock inte att upphöra, eftersom den ger det statliga flygbolaget Ariana - och därmed talibanerna själva - stora inkomster.

Slår mot kvinnorna

Tv och video var ett uppskattat sätt för Afghanistans hårt trängda kvinnor att förströ sig.

– Det var som att ha en liten del av vårt forna liv, säger Asafia Jamila, tidigare lärare, till nyhetsbyrån AP.

Kabuls enda biograf, som mest brukade visa indiska dansfilmer och kärlekshistorier, är förstås stängd. Redan förra året förbjöds innehav av videoband, men förbjudet utvidgades först nyligen till att också omfatta videobandspelare och tv-apparater.

– Tv-apparater och parabolter korrumperar de ungas moral, säger den talibanske regeringstjänstmannen Haji Mullah Qalamuddin.

Talibanerna tog över makten i den afghanska huvudstaden Kabul 1996, men kontrollerar inte hela landet. Inbördeskrig pågår i norra Afghanistan.

Talibaner nära inta avgörande fäste

9/8-98

KABUL, TT-AFP

► Den islamistiska talibanmilisen intog på lördagsmorgonen Mazar-i-Sharif, den enda återstående större afghanska staden som ännu kontrollerats av oppositionen.

Västerländska källor i staden sade att talibanerna utan större problem kunde ta sig in i staden. Igår kvällhövdade oppositionen att de hade drivit tillbaka talibanerna från staden efter två timmars strider - något talibanerna förnekade. Men striderna om staden uppgavs vara hårdare. Oppositionen verkade kämpa vidare, trots att flera uppgifter talade om att talibanerna hade fått kontroll över stora delar av staden.

Hårt tryck

Mazar-i-Sharif har stått under hårt tryck sedan talibanerna i förra veckan intog Shabarghan, huvudstad i grannprovinserna Jowzjan och hemstad för den uzbekiske krigsherren Rashid Dostam, en av oppositionsalliansens ledare.

Civila i staden sade att oppositionssoldaterna hade plundrat vad de kunde komma över innan de flydde att sydväst, i riktning mot det centrala höglandet som fortfarande domineras av den shiamuslimska milisen Hezb-i-Wahdat.

Enligt rapporter från bland andradan iranskansabysyrans

Irnastod delar av Mazar-i-Sharif i lågor och åtskilliga byggnader hade förstörts.

Talibanernas intåg i Mazar-i-Sharif är ett svårt diplomatiskt bakslag för Iran, som av både religiösa och geopolitiska skäl gett omfattande stöd åt Hezb-i-Wahdat och den övriga oppositionen. De sunni-extremistiska talibanerna har lika starkt stöd av Pakistan. Bland de byggnader i Mazar-i-

Sharif som talibanerna snabbt erövrade sades vara det iranska konsulatet. Irans utrikesminister värdjade på lördagsmiddagen till talibanerna att skona personalens liv.

Förnedrande nederlag

När talibanerna första gången intog Mazar-i-Sharif i maj förra året, var det med hjälp av en kommandant i staden som bröt med oppositionen. När samme

kommandant efter bara några dagar vände sig från talibanerna drevs dessa ut under förnedrande former. Minst 2500 talibansoldater tros ha dödats och slängts i massgravar.

Om talibanerna lyckas bättre denna gång kommer oppositionsstrykorna att stängas inne i otillgängliga bergsområden i centrala Afghanistan respektive i nordöst, varifrån de får mycket svårt att samla



sig till nya motoffensiver.

Talibanernas frammarsch orsakar grannländerna Uzbekistan och Tadzjikistan, som nu fruktar talibans infiltration över gränsen. De ryska gränsstrupperna i Tadzjikistan sades ha höjt sin beredskap.

BAKGRUND

Ett styre präglat av straff och förtryck

► Talibansrörelsen dök upp i Afghanistan 1996 och de skörde då snabbt framgångar. Rörelsen bestod av unga män, ofta föräldralösa, som växt upp i flyktingläger i Pakistan där de studerat islams heliga texter. Med sin strikta tolkning av koranen ville de renas upp i Afghanistan där många lokala krigsherrar utövade utpressning mot lokalbefolkningen och plundrade transporter och människor som färdades på vägarna.

De flesta som tillhör talibansrörelsen är pashtuner, Afghanistanets etniskt största folkgrupp. I de södra delarna av Afghanistan - som domi-

neras av pashtuner - hälsades talibanerna välkomna. De lyckades på många håll också överlämna renas upp bland lokala plågoandar och skapa bättre lag och ordning. Dessutom är pashtuner redan traditionellt mer konservativa än folkslagen i de norra delarna av landet, och därför möttes de inte av samma motstånd som när de har försökt erövra andra delar av landet.

Kriget tog ny vändning

Det var först när talibanerna intog huvudstaden Kabul, som inbördeskriget fick en ny vändning. Kabul har av tradition varit en mer etniskt blan-

dad stad och betydligt mer liberal och sekulariserad än den pashtun-dominerade landsbygden i södra Afghanistan. Invånarna i Kabul ålades plötsligt att följa strikta islamska regler, exempelvis har kvinnor bannlysts från att arbeta och nu senast har tv-apparater förbjuds. Ofentliga avrättningar har genomförts och befolkningen har skrämts av de nya styrande som också har kört iväg många av de hjälparbetare som varit viktiga för afghanerna.

När talibanerna nu har intagit den strategiskt viktiga staden Mazar-i-Sharif i norr, betyder det att även de etnis-

ka minoriteterna där tvingas underkasta sig talibanernas hårdare styre. Där bor främst uzbeker och andra folkslag med centralasiatiska rötter.

Annan syn på kvinnor

Även om de också är muslimer, har de normalt haft en helt annan syn på till exempel kvinnors möjlighet att arbeta. Talibanerna kommer att möta motstånd när de vill införa sitt strikta islamistiska styre i norr, men de har hittills inte visat tecken på att mjuknautan försöker tvärta i stället bestraffa befolkningen.

CARINA STENSSON

Talibanerna stärker sitt grepp om erövrad stad

Anb. etab
KABUL/TT-AFP

10/8-98

och Uzbekistan, rapporterade en talesman för talibanerna på söndagen.

Staden ligger vid Oxusfloden sex mil norr om Mazar-i-Sharif, som nu behärskas av taliberna.

1 Hairatan finns krigsherren Abdul Rashid Dostams styrkor.

Uzbekistan förseglade sin gräns mot Afghanistan förra året av rådska för att kriget där skall spilla över. Bron vid Hairatan är kraftigt försvarad med landminor och kulsprutensätt.

Talibanska styrkor riktade på söndagen ett angrepp mot oppositionens återstående styrkor norr om huvudstaden Kabul. Milisen har angripit Ahmed Ahah Masoods styrkor, uppgav nyhetsbyrån AIP som står talibanerna nära.

● Talibansrörelsen konsoliderade sitt grepp över den strategiskt viktiga staden Mazar-i-Sharif på söndagen medan motståndarnas styrkor sprids för alla nordafghanska vindar.

Under natten letade talibansoldater genom staden efter de sista motståndsfickorna. Den dammiga staden var helt i deras händer med posteriörer i korsningarna och vid den turkosa fredagsmoskén i centrum.

- Det är inte mycket vi kan göra just nu. Vårt folk är skingrat, tillstod Asad Ullah, talesman för krigsherren Abdul Rashid Dostam vars styrkor körts ut ut staden.

De styrkor som motsätter sig talibanernas väldre håller fortfarande staden Hairatan på gränsen mellan Afghanistan

Oppositionen har flytt Mazar-i-Sharif

11/8-98 KABUL, TT-AFP

► Både oberoende sagesmän och oppositionskällor i Afghanistan bekräftade i går att talibanerna nu skaffat sig full kontroll över Mazar-i-Sharif, oppositionens sista viktiga strategiska fäste i norr.

I Iran meddelades det att Teheran håller Pakistan ansvarigt för vad som sker med elva iranska diplomater som tagits till fånga av talibanerna i Mazar-i-Sharif.

Irans utrikesminister Kamal Kharrazi har i skarp ton klargjort för Pakistans ambassad i Teheran att Iran väntar

sig assistans från Pakistan, som har mycket goda förbindelser med talibanerna.

Iran vände sig på måndagen också till FN med en begäran om hjälp med att få diplomaterna och en journalist fria. De ska ha förts till sydvästra Afghanistan.

En hög företrädare för den talibantientliga oppositionsalliansen erkände att alla försök att köra ut talibanerna ur Mazar-i-Sharif hade misslyckats. Men han tillade att ett nytt anfall förbereds.

Oberoende källor beskrev läget inne i Mazar-i-Sharif som

lugnt, men att åtskilliga lik låg kvar på gatorna efter striderna.

Lördag-söndag ägnade talibanerna åt så kallade upprensningsaktioner. Medan de pågick fick befolkningen order att hålla sig hemma.

I Islamabad i Pakistan rapporterade den afghanska nyhetstjänsten AIP att en av den uzbekiske krigsherren Abdul Rashid Dostoms beväpnade misslyckats. Men han tillade att ett nytt anfall förbereds.

Oberoende källor beskrev läget inne i Mazar-i-Sharif som

"Pakistan deltar i striderna"

Ryssland anklagar nu Pakistan för att ge direkt militärt stöd till talibaneerna, som i går intog en ny provinshuvudstad i Afghanistan.

MOSKVA, TEHERAN, TT-REUTERS
► Ryssland anklagade på tisdagen Pakistan för att direkt stödja de afghanska talibaneernas fortsatta offensiv mot oppositionsstyrkor i norra Afghanistan.

Moskva överväger att öka sina militära insatser i allierade stater som gränsar till Afghanistan, hette det. Som belägg för sina anklagelser uppgav utrikesdepartementet i Moskva att många pakistans-

ska befäl har tagits till fånga av afghanska oppositionsstyrkor. Inga andra detaljer angavs dock.

Oro sedan tidigare

Ryssland har länge uttryckt oro över talibaneernas framfart och över att ha islamistiska extremister nära sina egna gränser. Länge har också ryssarna ansetts ge stöd i olika former till oppositionsstyrkorna.

Representanter för Ryssland, Uzbekistan och Tadzjikistan - alla medlemmar i de tidigare sovjetrepublikernas sammanslutning Oberoende Staters Samvälvde, OSS - möttes redan i förra veckan för att diskutera läget vid den afghanska gränsen.

Länderna är måna om att hindra spridning av militant islamism och stora flyktingströmmar till de egna territo-

rierna. Ryssland bistår redan Tadzjikistan genom att hålla 20 000 soldater i landet. De bevakar gränsen och slogs i det nyligen avslutade inbördeskriget mot muslimska oppositionsgrupper.

Den strängt muslimska talibaneansen fortsatte på tisdagen sin offensiv mot oppositionsalliansen i norr genom att erövra staden Taloqan i Takharprovinsen.

Staden föll efter en hel natts hårdare strider, uppgav en talesman för den legendariske befallhavaren Ahmad Shah Massoud, som på 1980-talet ledde striderna mot dåvarande Sovjetunionen. Många soldater stupade på båda sidor och många togs till fånga av talibaneerna, sade talesmannen.

Massoud sades ha upprättat ett nytt högkvarter två och en halv mil sydost om Taloqan.

Även den avsatte afghanske presidenten Burhanuddin Rabbani, som i förra veckan flydde när Mazar-i-Sharif erövrades av talibaneerna, fanns bland dem som tvingades lämna Taloqan natten till tisdagen, rapporterade nyhetsbyrån DPA.

Diplomater fångna

I Iran uppgav Pakistans ambassad att dess regering försöker utöva allt sitt inflytande på talibaneerna för att föra iranier som finns i stridsområdet till säkerhet.

Iran anklagar talibaneerna för att hålla elva diplomater och en journalist fångna, vilket talibaneerna förnekar.

Pakistans ambassad i Teheran förnekar också i sitt uttalande att landet skulle vara inblandat i striderna i Afghanistan.

AFGHANISTAN

Oppositionen avskuren från grannländer

SVD 13/8-98

KABUL, AP

► Talibaneerna intog på onsdagen gränsstaden Hayratan och klapptे därmed av oppositionens leveransvägar från Centralasien. Det innebär ännu en stor framgång för talibaneerna i deras kamp för att erövra hela Afghanistan.

Försvarsministeriet på andra sidan gränsen i Uzbekistan bekräftade stadens fall. Uzbekiska trupper längs den 15 mil långa gränsen har högsta beredskap om striderna skulle spilla över gränsen. Hayratan, 40 mil norr om huvudstaden Kabul, har varit oppositionsalliansens livlina till Centralasien. Nu är den helt isolerad inom Afghanistans gränser.

Dessutom tog talibaneerna på onsdagen Tangi Tashqurshan, vilket gör att de nu riskfritt kan använda flygplatsen i norra Afghanistans största stad Mazar-i-Sharif, som de erövrade i lördags. Oppositio-

nen övergav även staden Pul-i-Kumri, utan större motstånd, sade talibaneernas talesman Abdul Hay Muttayn. Enligt talesmannen retirerar oppositionen söderut mot den centrala provinsen Bamyan, ettav få kvarvarande fasten.

Motsägelsefulla löften

Talibaneerna har lovat att skapa fred i ett land som levit med konflikter sedan flera kupper på 1960-talet, men svor paradoxalt nog så sent som förra veckan att "införandet av islamisk lag till 100 procent skaske med militära medel". Med islamisk lag menar de bland annat förbjud för flickor att gå i skolan och förbud mot musik, film och teater.

Trots striderna näddes i går en överenskommelse mellan talibaneerna och FN om att internationella hjälparbete får komma tillbaka till sina gamla lokaler i Kabul. Hjälparbetare

från 38 olika organisationer kastades ut ur Afghanistan den 20 juli sedan de vägrat att flytta till lokaler de ansåg vara farliga och obeboeliga.

- Detta är ett genombrott, sade FN:s Bronek Szymalski om uppgörelsen, men han visste inte när hjälparbetarna kommer att kunna återvända.

Diplomater välbehållna:

Iran meddelade i går att de elva iranska diplomater och en journalist som i helgen kidnappades av den afghanska talibaneansen var välbehållna. De greps i Mazar-i-Sharif i norra Afghanistan och har nu förts till Kandahar. TT-AFP

Talibaneers offensiv fortsätter

KABUL. Talibaneerna fortsätter sin offensiv mot den alltmer trängda oppositionsalliansen i Afghanistan. På tisdagen rapporterades att talibaneerna intagit ännu en provinshuvudstad.

Taloqan, som är huvudstad i Takharprovinsen och ett fäste för Ahmed Shah Massoud, den talibaneanska sidans militära befallhavare, föll i måndags kväll. SVD 12/8-98/FLT-AP

Saudier misstänks för dåd

Av Kurt Mälärstedt

DN:s korrespondent 14/8-98

WASHINGTON. Två av de vita personer som gripits i Kenyas huvudstad Nairobi för bombdådet mot USA:s ambassad betecknas nu som misstänkta, enligt en poliskälla i Washington.

Enligt denna källa, citerad av nyhetsbyrån AP, är de två männen inte kenyanska medborgare, men deras nationalitet har inte avslöjats.

Samtidigt uppger flera andra källor i Washington enligt tidningen Washington Post att den landsförvisade saudiske miljonären Osama Bin Laden står mycket högt på listan över dem som misstänks för att ha organiserat och finansierat dåden mot de amerikanska ambassaderna i Nairobi och Tanzanias huvudstad Dar es Salaam.

Han hade motiv (ofta uttalat hat mot USA), möjlighet (en infrastruktur i området i form av en byggnadsfirma i Kenya) och resurser (ärvt förmögenhet på minst 300 miljoner dollar från sin far, som var miljardär i byggnadsbranschen).

I början av juni uttalade sig Bin Laden, som har sitt högkvarter i Afghanistan, mycket hotfullt i en intervju i det amerikanska nyhetsprogrammet "Nightline".

— Vi anser att de största tjuvorna i världen är amerikaner och att de största terroristerna i världen är amerikaner... Det enda sätt vi kan försvara oss är att använda liknande metoder. Vi skiljer inte på dem som är klädda i uniformer och civila. De är mål för denna fatwah (religiös order). Ni kommer att dra er tillbaka när amerikanska soldaters och civilas kroppar skickas (hem) i trälådor.

Bin Laden har offentligt tagit på sig ansvaret för en bombattack mot 100 amerikanska soldater i Jemen 1992 och offentligt medgett att hans soldater bekämpade amerikanska styrkor i Somalia 1993.

En del amerikanska tjänstemän misstänker att Bin Laden var inblandad i bombdådet mot World Trade Center i New York 1993.

Vincent Cannistraro, tidigare chef för CIA:s kontraterrorism, säger till Washington Post att han tror att Bin Laden sponsrat bombdåden i Nairobi.

Analytikern Kenneth Katzman vid Congressional Research Service är emellertid inte lika övertygd, även om han betecknar Bin Laden som den mest kände interna-

Talibāner fortsätter sin blixtoffensiv

Hjälpparationer får återvända till Afghanistan

Arbete
Nyheterna
13/8-98

● Talibāner fortsätter sin blixtoffensiv och framryckning i norra Afghanistan och behärskar nu hela landet bortsett från två provinser och enstaka fickor i centrala delar av landet. Den besegrade s k norra alliansens styrkor har flytt eller dragit sig tillbaka. Men den överraskande utvecklingen innebär inte på något sätt ett slut på det inbördeskrig som pågått i landet sedan sovjetiska ockupationsarméns reträtt för 9,5 år sedan.

Samtidigt kommer uppgifter om att FN:s förhandlare träffat en överenskommelse med talibānerna som innebär att utländska hjälpparationer kan återvända till huvudstaden Kabul och återuppta sin verksamhet. Även detta förefaller vara en delseger för talibānerna som i ett dekret för tre veckor sedan förvisade alla hjälpare till det utbombade universitetsområdet fyra km utanför stans centrum.

Medan talibānerna jublar över framgångarna ökar oron i grannländerna och

både Moskva och Teheran anklagade återigen Pakistan för att direkt ha deltagit i fälttåget som på en dryg vecka lett till att fem hela provinser och fyra större städer fallit.

Diplomater spioner

Oron för vad som nu ska hänta i de "befriade" områdena ökar också sedan talibānerna vägrat godta den diplomatstopp som personalen vid det iranska konsulatet i Mazar-i-Sharif enligt internationell lag har. Talibānerna betraktar både de elva diplomaterna och ytterligare ett 40-tal andra landsmän som "utländska spioner" och har redan gjort klart att de ska ställas inför islamisk domstol för "sina brott mot Afghanistanas islamiska emirat".

Talibānerna kontrollerar nu mer än 90 procent av Afghanistan men frågan är om de förmår utöva sin makt med annat än maskingevär och terror.

Befolningen i de nu erövrade provinserna domine-

ras av etniska minoriteter - tajikar, uzbeker och hazaras - som alla är fientligt inställda till talibānerna som tillhör pashtuner, landets traditionella härskeare. Till detta kommer att en stor del av regionen styrs av general Rashid Dostum, en quisling och korrumperad kvarleva från den sovjetiska epoken, medan resten behärskats av de för talibānerna lika förhatliga krigsherrarna Rabbani och Massoud.

Oislamiska avfallningar

Den fria livsstilen i Mazar där kvinnor kunnat studera vid universitet och slippit hårdas klädesregler innebär också att talibānerna betraktar civilbefolknings som oislamiska avfallningar.

En tredje orsak till oron är att hazaras är shia-muslimer som stöds av Iran och i fjol ställde till med massaker på talibānerkrigare just i Mazar: Närmare 1.000 höggs ihjäl på gatorna.

— Övergreppen som skett i Kabul kan framstå som rena västanfläkten jämfört med

den hämnd som väntar folket i Mazar, säger en biståndsarbetare till AN.

Ett faktum som kan underlätta för talibānerna är general Dostums otroliga vanstyre på senare år som kan bidra till både uppgivenhet och ett tyrt välvkommande för de nya härskarna.

Utmanningen är dock monumental och frågan är om inte talibānerna gapat över alldeles för mycket.

Förstärkningar krävs

Det krävs stora militära förstärkningar för att konsolidera läget och det krävs helt nya administrationer på olika nivåer i alla provinserna för att de ska kunna införa sin extrema tolkning av islam.

Krigsherren Massoud, som dragit sig tillbaka till Panjshir-dalen, kan fortfarande ställa till problem liksom hazaras i Bamyan.



Bo Gunnarsson

Talibānernas segrar skrämmar OSS

DN 13/8-98

RYSSLAND. Rysslands försvarsminister Igor Sergejev meddelade på onsdagskvällen att militära förstärkningar skall göras längs gränsen mellan Tadzjikistan och Afghanistan. Han gick inte in närmare på vilken form förstärkningarna skulle få men beskedet kom samtidigt som talibānerna i Afghanistan rapporterades ha framgångar och var på framryckning mot gränsen.

Beslutet fattades efter möte mellan militära ledare inom samväldet av forna Sovjetstater, OSS. Den Moskvastödda tadzjikiska regeringen som utkämpat ett blodigt inbördeskrig mot upproriska islamister sade att "vi följer händelseutvecklingen mycket noga".

Samtidigt som talibānerna i Afghanistan på onsdagen rapporterade om nya framgångar i inbördeskriget mot Nordalliansen meddelade FN att hjälpparationerna skall återvända till landets huvudstad genom en kompromiss med regimen. Hjälparbetarna lämnade Kabul i protest men fann uppenbarligen protesten resultatlös. Nu är det viktigtare att befina sig bland de 400 000 hjälpbhövande där.

När talibānerna intog storstaden Mazar-i-Sharif i lördags var det möjligt en vändpunkt som enligt många iakttagare påskyndade deras fullständiga seger. Sedan dess har offensiven rullat vidare, och talibānerna rapporterades på onsdagen ha tagit även städerna Talogan och Pul-i-Khumri.

Nordalliansens ledare Rabbani, Masood och Dostum flyttar utåt landets periferi. Ryssland, som stöder Nordalliansen framhåller att de ändå fortfarande befinner sig inne i Afghanistan.

TT-Reuters

tionelle terroristen sedan "Carlos Schakalen".

Det amerikanska utrikesdepartementet har nu bekräftat att ambassadören i Nairobi, Prudence Bushnell i december förra året begärde anslag för att förbättra säkerheten vid sin ambassad, helst bygga en ny. Begäran avslöjades emellertid av kostnadsskäl.

Kistorna med kvarlevorna efter tio av de tolv amerikaner som dödades i Nairobi togs på torsdagen emot vid en högtidlig och rörande ceremoni på Andrews-flygbasen utanför Washington i närvaro av president Clinton, utrikesministern Madeleine Albright och försvarsministern William Cohen.

Hämnd och terror utövas mot civila

Arb elet 15/8-98

Rapporter om etniska massakrer i Afghanistan

● Efter sin blixtoffensiv och erövrandet av större delen av norra Afghanistan flyger talibaneerna nu in i stora förstärkningar för konsolidering av sina ställningar, oskadliggörande av besegrade rivaler och maktutövning över en fientlig men skrämd civilbefolkning. I Pakistans nordvästra gränsprovins (NWFP) töms koranskolorna på elever och tusentals religiöst indoktrinerade ungdomar ger sig av för att delta i slutfasen av "jihad", det heliga kriget i Allahs namn.

Förödmjukad Massoud

Den legendariske krigsheren Abdul Shah Massoud är besegrad, avväpnad och förödmjukad, sviken av många av sina behälhavare som med svansen mellan benen bytt lojalitet, despoten i "Norra Republiken", Rashid Dostum, har flytt liksom presidenten Rabban, Hekmatyar och många andra.

För andra dagen i rad flygbombades staden Bamian, 30.000 invånare, på fredagen och olika källor uppger att den står i brand. Det är en ren

terror - och hämnd - mot civilbefolkningen eftersom talibaneerna inte har några alls trupper på tio mils avstånd.

Hämnd är vad alla fruktar och de första ännu obekräftade rapporterna om etniska massakrer har redan kommit från både oppositionen och ryska källor i angränsande Tajikisthan.

Hämnden är ljuv och har till stor del motiverat talibaneñas hårda, alltmer bisarra dekret och styre i huvudstaden Kabul de senaste två åren.

Under de tio åren av Sovjetens ockupation sågs Kabul av mujahedin som ondskans säte och syndens näste, en cancer svulst av allt det förbjudna, oislamskt in i ryggmärgen och befläckat av främmande livsstilar, en nutida motsvarighet till antikens Sodom och Gomorra.

På samma sätt har talibaneerna beskrivit Mazar-i-Sharif och de provinser som de nu återförenat med faderslandet, Afghanistan's islamiska emirat.

Men i den s k norra republiken tillkommer andra faktorer som skruvar upp kraven

på en primitiv vedergällning till en hederssak.

Mer än 1.000 unga talibankrigare slaktades på Mazars gator för 14 månader sedan då shia-milisen Hizbe Wahdat löpte amok mot de islamiska zeloterna. Ytterligare 2.000 talibaneer arkebuserades senare av uzbekisk milis trots sin status som krigsfångar.

Ingen ände på vedergällningen

Etnisk rivalitet, religiös anomisitet - hazaras är shias och stöds av Iran, talibaneernas teokratiska motpol - och mer än tjugo år av gudlöst styre under Sovjet och senare quislingen Dostum fördjupar klyftorna till en avgrund.

I Kabul, Afghanistans utbombade huvudstad, ser man ännu efter två år ingen ände på talibaneernas bisarra vedergällning. I snart två år har de islamiska zeloterna och dess ministerium för "propagerande av dygd och förhindrande av synd" med dekret, vapenmakt och raider av hem, sjukhus och arbetsplatser sökt renan utfattiga befolkningens själar och mullornas ofta

oskrivna lagar har skärpts undan för undan.

Det är inte bara i norr som man fruktar det värsta. Talibaneernas pakistanska hejarklack ledd bl a av f d ÖB, general Aslam Beg, har i sina hyllningsartiklar till "befriarna" betonat att hazaras har all anledning att känna stor oro inför enandet av det krigsförödda landet.

Hazaras, som kommer från centrala höglandet, har alltid varit den fattigaste och mest utsatta av landets alla etniska minoriteter. Hälften av Mazars befolkning på 400.000 anses vara hazaras och många av dem tros ha flytt söderut til Bamian-provinsen som shia-milisen fortfarande kontrollerar.

Det är ett mycket stort område som talibaneerna nu lagt under sig och bristen både på ledning, manskap och administration ökar farhågorna för humanitära övergepp och blind hämnd.



Bo
Gunnarsson

Ska få motståndare ge upp

KABUL. Talibanregimen i Afghanistan försöker övertala de sista motståndsledarna att ge upp.

- Vi vill inte att fler mänskor dör, sade talibangeneralen Mullah Abdul Satar på fredagen.

Satar sade att han talat med flera motståndsledare för att försöka övertala dem att ge upp och släppa igenom talibaneerna längs den strategiskt viktiga motorvägen norr om Kabul.

Han menade att oppositionen inte längre har någon anledning att släss eftersom "vi nu kontrollerar 90 procent av Afghanistan's territorium". De senaste dagarna har talibaneerna haft överraskande stora framgångar: den största staden i norra Afghanistan, Mazar-i-Sharif, har fallit, liksom gränsstaden Hayratana som var motståndsstyrkornas enda port till världen utanför Afghanistan. *SUD 15/8-98* /FLT-AP

Talibaneerna fortsätter segertåg i Afghanistan

KABUL/TEHERAN, TT-AFP

► Den afghanska talibanska islamistmilisen hävdade på söndagen att den fått fotfäste även i den förra presidentens hemprovins Badakhshan. Talibaneernas segertåg i norr fortsätter, sedan de i veckoslutet tagit kontroll över fler viktiga städer.

Talesmän för talibaneerna sade att lokala kommandanter i en rad distrikter i det av tadzjiker befolkade Badakhshan i landets nordöstra hörn hissat vita flaggor som tecken på sin lojalitet mot talibaneerna. Den

förre presidenten Rabbanis trupper är på flykt högre upp bland bergen, uppgav talibaneernas språkrör Radio Sharat.

Efter talibaneernas intåg i Mazar-i-Sharif för drygt en vecka sedan har det kommit oroande rapporter om förföljelse där av uzbeker och andra minoriteter.

Grannlandet Iran, som alltid motsatt sig de sunniextremistiska talibaneerna, har inlett en diplomatisk offensiv mot talibaneerna och dess skyddsmakt Pakistan. *SUD 17/8-98*

Sv. D. 16/8 - 98

Talibaneer intar flera städer

Islamabad: Talibaneerna som numera behärskar 90 procent av Afghanistan uppgav sig på lördagen ha erövrat ännu en stad i norra delen av landet, meddelade den afghanska Pakistansbaserade presstjänsten AIP.

Talibaneerna ska ha intagit Doshi som ligger nära den strategiskt viktiga Salangtunneln, vilken förbinder huvudstaden Kabul med norra delen av landet. TT-AFP 16/8-98

Järnridå i Afghanistan

Talibanerna vägrar utomstående tillträde till Mazar-i-Sharif
16/8 - 98

ISLAMABAD/TT-AFP

● En vecka efter det att talibanerna erövrade Mazar-i-Sharif, oppositionens tidigare fäste i norra Afghanistan, ligger en järnridå runt området. Nu växer oron för civilbefolknings tillstånd. Erövrandet av Mazar-i-Sharif var talibanernas största triumf sedan den islamistiska milisen intog huvudstaden Kabul för nästan två år sedan. Men hittills har alla ansökningar från entragna journalister om att få besöka Mazar-i-Sharif avslagits.

– Vi har fått in en mängd knapphändiga rapporter från ett stort antal källor om summariska avrättningar och massgripanden i Mazar-i-Sharif, säger en västdiplomat.

– Inga uppgifter kan helt bekräftas, men vi anser att oron är befogad eftersom ingen kan veta exakt vad som pågår där och vi nekas allt tillträde till området.

Oberoende källor säger att ännu en vecka efter det att oppositionsstyrkorna drevs ut ur staden befinnar sig invånarna i praktiken i husarrest, medan talibanerna letar igenom hus efter hus ef-

ter dolda vapen.

– Sporadisk skottlossning kan höras, trots att allt motstånd tycks vara över, säger en oberoende källa som har kontakter i staden.

Oron gäller främst de shia-muslimska hazarer som lever i Mazar-i-Sharif. De är av tradition starka motståndare till de puritanskt sunnimuslimska talibanerna, vilka till allra största delen är pashtuner, Afghanistans dominanterande folkgrupp.

Erövringsförsök slogs tillbaka

Två försök av talibanerna förra året att erövra Mazar-i-Sharif slogs tillbaka av den shiamuslimska milisen. I maj förra året lyckades talibanerna ta sig in i staden och hålla den ett par dagar tack vare att en lokal befälhavare bröt med stadens övriga försvare. När samme befälhavare snart vände talibanerna ryggen igen fann sig dessa instängda i en fälla. Upp till 2.500 talibansoldater blev kallblodigt slaktade och dumpade i massgravar och ytterligare flera tusen togs tillfänga.

Den här gången tycks de fått beslutna att inte ta några risker.

Alla försök av västerländska journalister att få besöka Mazar-i-Sharif avvisas bryskt och utan förklaringar av såväl utrikesdepartementet som informationsdepartementet och höga talibanska företrädare i milisens högkvarter i Kandahar.

Inte ens pakistanska journalister, som annars säger sig ha goda kontakter i den talibanska ledningen, har lyckats få inresetillstånd till de nyerövrade områdena i norr.

Talibanerna som numera bevärsar 90 procent av Afghanistan uppgav sig på lördagen ha erövrat ännu en stad i norra delen av landet, meddelade den afghanska Pakistanbaserade presstjänsten AIP.

Talibanerna ska ha intagit Doshi som ligger nära den strategiskt viktiga Salangtunneln, vilken förbinds huvudstaden Kabul med norra delen av landet.

Senare på lördagen rapporterade talibanerna om ännu en framgång på slagfältet. Aibak, huvudstad i provinsen Samangan, erövrades av talibanerna enligt nyhetsbyrån AIP.

Herrn mets Vän
2,6 miljoner
afghaner på
20/8-98 flykt

GENEVE (TT-AFP) Fyra miljoner afghanska flyktingar har under de senaste åren kunnat återvända till sina hem. Ännu är dock 2,6 miljoner afghaner flyktingar och i stort behov av fortsatt humanitär stöd. Det sade Sadako Ogata, chef för FN:s flyktingkommisariat UNHCR i samband med att organisationen inledder en ny insamlingskampanj till förmån för de afghanska flyktingarna.

Uppemot 1,2 miljoner afghaner lever i Pakistan och 1,4 miljoner i Iran enligt UNHCR:s beräkningar. Dessutom finns flera hundra tusen afghaner i före detta Sovjetrepubliker.

UNHCR behöver 21 miljoner dollar i år för att förbättra infrastrukturen i de delar av Afghanistan dit flyktingar kan återvända men har hittills bara fått in 4,5 miljoner från givarländerna.

Man erkände ambassaddåd

Washington: En man som erkänt medskuld till sprängattentaten mot amerikanska ambassader i Afrika har överlämnats av Pakistan till Kenya, rapporterar Washington Post på söndagen. Men amerikanska källor ställer sig skeptiska.

Pakistanska myndigheter grep mannen när han försökte resa till Afghanistan med ett pass där fotografiet inte föreställde honom själv. Han togs på Karachis flygplats den 7 augusti, dagen efter sprängningarna i Nairobi och Dar-es-Salaam. Därefter utsattes han för "intensiva förhör" som ledde till att han erkände delaktighet i sprängdåden, rapporterar pakistanska tidningar.

Utredare i Kenya har hittat en drivaxel av stål, som de tror kan bli en viktig ledtråd i jakten på de skyldiga till bombattentatet.

Den 45 kilo tunga drivaxeln tros komma från den lätta lastbilen av märket Mitsubishi som utredarna misstänker fraktade bomben. Enligt tidskriften Newsweek, som citerade amerikanska källor, finns ett serienummer på drivaxeln som gör att man kan identifiera bilen. TT-AFP-REUTERS 17/8 - 98

Herrn mets Vän 20/8 - 98

Afghanska flickor utan skolgång

Sedan den extrema muslimska armén, talibanerna, erövrat det mesta av Afghanistan är förutsättningarna för fred och frihet minimala. Det inser även FN, som hittills gjort mycket för att bistå den av krig länge plågade befolkningen.

Talibanerna tillhör de mest konserativa av alla muslimer någonsin och tolkar Koranen bokstavligt. Det gäller särskilt synen på kvinnan som anses vara ytterst mindervärdig jämförd med mannen.

Nyligen lämnade 38 utländska hjälpororganisationer huvudstaden Kabul efter att ha vägrat lyda ett dekret som motsäger mänskliga rättigheter för kvinnor.

När organisationerna utvisades från universitets sociala område till stadens utkant packade man sinn tillhörigheter och lämnade landet. Bland dessa grupper var Läkare utan gräns, Care International och Oxfam.

Även Nybyggets fyra missionsarbetare Anders och Christina Malmstigen, Lars-Gunnar och

Anneli Nilsson är bland dem som på grund av de hoplösa förhållanden tvingats lämna landet.

Talibanerna som nu kontrollerar 85 procent av landet har stängt alla skolor för flickor och förbjudit kvinnor att arbeta utanför hemmet. Behovet av läkare och övrig personal i sjukvården är enormt. Tiotusentals män behöver vård efter att ha skadats i kriget och hela det sociala samhället är beroende av utländskt bistånd. När det på nytt kan ges är ovisst.

JEMA

PORTRÄTT

bin Laden vill föra heligt krig mot USA

SVD 21/8-98

► Terrorledaren och mångmiljoner Osama bin Laden som USA slog till mot på torsdagen utpekas inte bara som ansvarig för bombdåden i Kenya och Tanzania. Han anklagas av USA också för att ha sökt döda påven och Egyptens president.

Det skulle i så fall rimma väl med det "heliga krig" som han proklamerat mot såväl USA, Israel och de sekulariserade arabiska stater han anser förråder islam. Både den saudiskfödde affärsmannen bin Laden själv och USA talar om att han kontrollerar tusentals soldater. Siffror på 4000-5000 förekommer - i Afghanistan beväpnade med luftvärnsrobotar, raketer och även stridsvagnar.

Osama bin Laden är saudisk byggnadsegenjör och jordbruksman från början. Han är en av 20 söner till den rike, numera döde affärsmannen Muhammed bin Laden och anses omättigt rik. Som motståndare till kungaregimen i Saudiarabien berövades han sitt medborgarskap där 1994, "för uppörande som står i motsats till

kungarikets intressen och risikerar att skada dess relation till förbrödrande länder". Enligt Sunday Times bor han i ett i ett välbevakat bergrum utrustat med James Bond-liknande postmodern elektronik.

Slog mot Sovjetunionen

En år i kräftekne USA och dess underhållsorgan är han vänkänd. Under den sovjetiska ockupationen av Afghanistan på 1980-talet tillhörde han de gerillakämpar åtta där, beväpnades och tränades via CIA samt finansierades via Saudi-arabien. Han rekryterade soldater från Egypten, Algeriet, Libanon, Kuwait, Turkiet och Tunisien. Hans roll var att skaffa fram vapen, hjälpa till med byggnadsverksamhet och han deltog själv i kampen mot rysarna.

Sovjetunionen drevs visserligen ut ur Afghanistan men USA och de rika arabstaterna som bidrog närde också ett monster: "de arabiska afghanerna". Så kallas de grupper av heliga terrorkrigare Osama bin Laden anses understödja ekonomiskt eller rent av kontroll-

lera. Utbildningsläger finns eller har funnits i Algeriet, Pakistan, Jemen, Algeriet och Sudan.

Enligt flera källor deklarerade bin Laden i februari i år tillsammans med militanta muslimska ledare från bland annat Egypten, Pakistan och Bangladesh den "islamisk internationell front". Målet var att attackera amerikanska mål världen över i "heligt krig". Amerikanerna kommer att möta ett öde liknande vad som skedde med Sovjetunionen", hotade man. "Det är en plikt att döda amerikaner och deras allierade, civila som militärer.

Det är inte första gången Osama bin Laden kopplas till attacker mot USA. Pakistaniern Ramzi Ahmed Yousef som dömdes för att ha varit hjärnan bakom bomben i World Trade Center i New York 1983 uppger han bott i bin Ladens hus i Pakistan. Hans lägenhet i New York betalandes också av bin Laden. Bombdådet i Dhabran i Saudiariabien i juni 1996 där 19 amerikanska soldater dödades anses av USA ha utsatts av bin Laden.

När USA för några få dagar sedan av säkerhetsskäl stängde sin ambassad i Sudans huvudstad Khartoum var det uppenbart en gardering inför torsdagens bombangrepp där bin Laden har gjort Sudan - utpekat som ett drivhus för internationella terroristläger - stora tjänster.

Bygge motorväg

Han gjorde han sig vänt med regeringen genom att bygga en motorväg mellan huvudstaden Khartoum och Port Sudan vid kusten, som förkortade sträckan med 80 mil. I Khartoum attackerade USA lämedelsfabriken Shifa som misstänktes för att börja tillverka kemiska vapen, bland annat den fruktade dödliga nervgasen VX.

Ett officiellt angivet motiv för att USA slog till så snabbt var att fler terrorattacker skulle vara förestående. Mot den bakgrundan kan man också se beslutet att tidigare denna vecka stänga USA-ambassaden i Pakistan, granne till Afghanistan.

MIKAEL HOLMSTRÖM

Nu flyr utlänningsarna Afghanistan och Pakistan

Anled 21/8-98

● Det amerikanska beslutet att bomba terroristbaser inne i Afghanistan och Sudan var väntat. Med överväldigande bevis för att den saudiarabiske miljardären och islamisten Osama Bin Laden, 42, finansierade och låg bakom bombningarna av ambassaderna i Kenya och Tanzania som krävde 257 mänskiskolv sätta var det bara en tidsfråga

innan beskedet skulle komma.

En första antydan kom på torsdagsförmiddagen då amerikanska UD uppmanade alla utlänningsar anställda av icke muslimska hjälplägenheter att omedelbart lämna Afghanistan.

Hur många som finns kvar i landet är okänt eftersom det är mindre än en vecka sedan talibanska regin tillät dem att återvända till huvudstaden Kabul efter en månads lång förvisning efter ett torsdagsmötet.

De amerikanska bombningarna, som enligt uppgift utfördes mot tre olika platser och sex delmål i Afghanistan, kommer att utlösa en storm av protester och demonstrationer framför allt i Pakistan och i många arabländer.

Det redan spända läget förvärvas sät att de flesta utlänningsar vingas att tempolägt fly från Pakistan. Talibana

Enligt planerna skulle han återvända till Peshawar i Pakistan men händelseutvecklingen nu hotar att stoppa såväl FN:s som Röda Korsets flygningar.

En annan svensk, John Wolgers, SAK:s ansvarige i Jalalabad, lyckades på torsdagskvällen ta sig till Peshawar med bil.

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Islamisten och miljardären Osama Bin Laden var USA:s främsta mål för attackerna. Enligt talibana undkom han bombningarna oskadd.

anhängare.

- Alt tyder på att vi kommer att evakuera all vår utländska personal, säger Peter Hjukström, ansvarig för SAK:s kontor i Stockholm till AN. Bombningarna hotar att

utlösa pöbelvåld och vi vägar inte ta några som helst risker.

Osama Bin Laden, kallad terrorbankiren, hålls ansvarig för en lång där bombdåd utomlands, bl a sprängningen av World Trade Center i New York, egyptiska ambassaden i Islamabad och amerikanska militärbasen i Saudiarien.

Han har flera träningsläger och bär i Afghanistan, bl a i Khost nära den pakistanska gränsen och i Jalalabad. Han omges av ett 50-tal livvakter och har sin familj, fyra hustrur och stort antal barn, i Kandahar där han bor granne med Mullah Omar, talibanaernas gäfulte ledare. Av säkerhetsskäl tillbringar han aldrig mer än fyra-fem nätter på samma plats, och talibanaerna har redan meddelat att han är oskadd efter bombningarna.

BO GUNNARSSON

Malmöbon Sidney Petersson är fortfarande kvar i Afghanistan.



Malmöbon Sidney Petersson är fortfarande kvar i Afghanistan.

Clinton beordrar attacker

DN 21/8-98

Afghanistan och Sudan. Republikanska politiker ifrågasatte genast Vita Husets motiv.

Av Lennart Pehrson

NEW YORK. USA attackerade på torsdagen terroristinal i Afghanistan och Sudan. Angreppen riktades mot grupper som enligt USA var ansvariga för bombningarna av USA:s ambassader i Kenya och Tanzania den 7 augusti. President Bill Clinton, som i egenkap av USA:s högsta befälhavare beordrade den militära operationen, avbröt hastigt sin semester på ön Martha's Vineyard utanför Massachusetts kust.

— Vi har bättande bevis för att nya terroriststånd planerades mot USA, förklarade president Clinton innan han återvände till Washington för att sammanträda med sitt nationella sikrhetsträd.

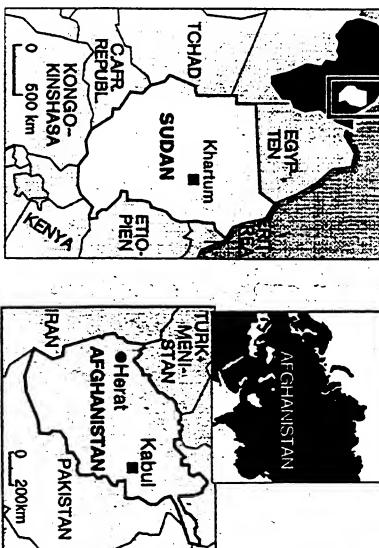
Två militära attacker inleddes samtidigt exakt klockan 19.30 svensk tid. Den ena rikts från USA:s attackerade

tades mot vad som uppges vara ett stort utbildningscenter för terrorister i ett ödigt område av Afghanistan. Den andra attacken utfördes mot en fabrik i Sudan som enligt Pentagon, USA:s försvarstecknare, kan användas för att framställa kemiska stridsmedel.

Målet för attackerina var terroristgrupper som enligt USA:s underhållsministern, avbröt hastigt sin semester på ön Martha's Vineyard utanför Massachusetts kust.

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Två militära attacker inleddes samtidigt exakt klockan 19.30 svensk tid. Den ena rikts från USA:s attackerade



terikanska intressen.

— Det finns dessutom bevis för att de utpekade terroristgrupporna heller på att använda kemiska stridsmedel och andra massförstörelseväpn. USA:s försvarstecknare William Cohen förklarade kort efter att attackerina i Afghanistan och Sudan verkställts att operationerna inte i första hand ska ses som en hämndaktion för bombdåden i Östafrika utan mer som en del av USA:s självförsvar.

— Alla terrorister måste veta att det inte finns någon säker hamn nära oss, att det inte finns någonstans att gömma sig, saude förvarsministern. Annarsvärt nog ifrågasätter Vita husets motiverat att inte flera republikaner har bevis för att det var grupperna som utfört tidigare

attackerna.

— Det finns bevis för att att dessa grupper planerar yt-

USA:S ATTACKER

Pakistan pressas om anfall

DN 24/8-98

ISLAMABAD/WASHINGTON, TT-AFP

► Pakistans regering pressas nu av militära och religiösa ledare om sin roll innan USA genomförde sina hämndanfall mot misstänkta terroristmål i torsdags. Stora delar av den muslimska världen är i uppror.

USA:s robotanfall mot Afghanistan och Sudan krävde minst 30 liv.

Den förra pakistanska överbefälhavaren Mirza Aslam Beg anklagade i ett uttalande på söndagen regeringen i Islamabad för att ha tillåtit USA:s underrättelseorgan att arbeta från pakistansk territorium i syfte att spåra den islamiska extremistledaren Osama bin Laden. Beg krävde att premiärminister Nawaz Sharif avslöjar vilket slags samarbete Pakistan hade med USA före anfallet med kryssningsrobotar mot vad som sades vara utbildningsläger för terrorgrupper i östra Afghanistan.

Kränte territorium

Även andra höga pakistanska militärer kräver att sanningen kommer fram och påpekar att såväl kryssningsrobotarna som de fartyg vilka avfyrade dem kränkte pakistansk territorium. Enligt tidningen The Muslim hade antingen radarsystemet störts eller så utfördes anfallet med den pakistanska regeringens samförstånd.

Enligt diplomater i Islamabad är det dock osannolikt att den pakistanska regeringens vänskap med västmakterna skulle skadas av robotanfallen, rapporterade nyhetsbyrån Reuters. Därför har man inte förbjudit dem.

Fler attentat planerades

De blodiga sprängattentaten mot USA:s ambassader i Kenya och Tanzania, i vilka 257 personer dödades och tusentals skadades, var de första i en serie på minst tre terrordåd. Det hävdade general Henry Shelton, USA:s överbefälhavare, på söndagen.

Han tillade för tv-bolaget CBS att det finns "mycket pålitlig och övertygande information" om att upp till fyra attentat planerades.

Försvarsminister William Cohen sade till tv-bolaget NBC på söndagen att ytterligare terrordåd kan inträffa.

Sudan välkomnar USA

Sudan välkomnar att en kommission från USA kommer till Khartoum för att utreda om den fabrik som anfölls med kryssningsrobotar verkligen tillverkade substanser till nervgasen VX. Det förklarade utrikesminister Mustafa Osman Ismail i Iraks huvudstad Bagdad på söndagen.

Säkerhetsrådet ska träffas bakom lyckta dörrar på måndagen för att dryfta Sudans protest mot bombningen.

bin Laden som utförde de förstattacken i Kenya och Tanzania som dödade över 250 män, varav 12 amerikaner, och skadade mer än 5 000.

• Det finns också bevis för att dessa grupper planerar yt-

och Dan Coats från Indiana, undrade om inte tidpunkten indikerade att presidenten på det här sättet försöker dra upp märksamheten från sina sexkäffare och de trovärdighetsproblem han åsamkats för sin förbindelse med Monica Lewinsky. De klagade också över att kongressen inte vidare i förväg. Kongressens republikanske talmann, Newt Gingrich, uttalade dock sitt stöd för presidenten.

USA:s militära ledning var inledningsvis mycket knapphändig med uppgifter om operationen som administratörer inom försvarsmakten, men inte för att inte flera amerikanska stridsplaner, Pentagonas ledning, avslöjade heller inte om Afghanistan och Sudan var informationer om attackerna i förväg men William Cohen bekräftade att attackerna inte riktade mot terroristgrupper som stöds av några stater.

– Död åt amerikanerna

Den muslimska världen rasar mot USA:s hämndattacker



Pakistanska demonstranter skriker slagord mot USA från ett bussstak vid en protest i Islamabad.

Foto: AGHA MAHROUZ

Arbete Nyheterna 22/8-98

● Död åt alla amerikaner...

Slagropen ekade på fredagen i Afghanistan, Pakistan och flera arabiska länder. Trots president Clintons försäkringar om att bombingarna var riktade mot terrormisternas hjärta och inte mot islam uppfattas de på många håll som en anti-muslimsk handling och ett försök att vända världens uppmärksamhet från hans egna problem och CIA:s fiasco i Kenya och Tanzania.

Undkom oskadd

Osama bin Laden, 42, den saudiske miljardären som misstänks ha legat bakom de blodiga attentaten mot de amerikanska ambassaderna för två veckor sedan och som kallas "terroristbankären" undkom oskadd och kan i dag med stor sannolikhet räkna med många nyrekryteringar till sitt heliga krig mot världens enda supermakt.

Bombregnet – uppemot 100 kryssningsrobotar – mot hans hemliga baser i bergen

kring Khost nära gränsen mot Pakistan uppges ha krävt minst 26 människoliv, därav fem i närliggande by inne i Pakistan.

Vid attacken mot den misstänkta nervgasfabriken i Khartoum, som sudanesiska myndigheter hävdar är en läkemedelsindustri, skadades ett tiotal personer.

Stora demonstrationer rapporteras från olika håll och leddes till att alla utlämningar i Pakistan stängde in sig bakom låsta dörrar i hopp om att kunna vänta ut krisen.

Redo att fly

I Peshawar, där Svenska Afghanistan-kommittén (SAK) har sitt kontor, paralyserades centrum flera timmar av uppörda demonstranter och stämningen var oerhört spänd.

– Vi har bilarna packade och flyr så snabbt vi kan om dom tågar hitat, uppgav en hjälparbetare.

Den talibane-ledda regeringen i Kabul har starkt för-

dömt USA:s bombingar som ett ildåd riktat mot den afghanska nationen men uppges senare på kvällen ha tilltänt FN att evakuera de 45 utlämningar som fortfarande finns kvar i huvudstaden, bland dem svenska Svante Yngroth som arbetar för Internationella röda korset.

Det skedde sedan två FN-anställda beskjutits och skadats av okända personer under en bilfärd i Kabul.

– Vi fördömer väldet men folk är upprörda, sa en talesman för talibaneerna.

Evakueras

Evakueringen kan sannolikt ske på lördagen och den enda utlämning som då lämnas kvar i landet är malmöbon Sidney Pettersson, 60, som natten till i går efter sju timmars bilkörning tog sig från Mazar-i-Sharif till Taloqan.

– Vi bedömer att han är säkrare där än i Peshawar, säger Peter Hjukström på SAK i Stockholm till AN.

De amerikanska bombingarna av Osama bin La-

dens högkvarter i Afghanistan komplicerar och förvärpar det politiska läget i hela regionen och i många arabländer.

Medan regimerna i Saudi-arabien och Egypten uppennat get sin välsignelse befaras många islamiska ungdomar som i tyshet beundrat eller stött den förmögne och karismatiska rebellernas styrkor.

4.000 medlemmar

Han anses ha drygt 500 religiösa och fredlösa zeloter med sig i Afghanistan och var gudafader till hemliga organisationer med 4.000 medlemmar i arabländerna. Också i Pakistan åtnjuter han stort stöd av islamister och tusentals ungdomar vid koranskolorna i gränsprovinserna tros nu gå med i talibaneernas led.



Bo Gunnarsson

Lewinsky vittnar – Clinton bombar

Stundtals är det internationella systemet alltför maktlöst mot hänsynslösa terrorister

Specialåklagaren Kenneth Starr är inte nöjd. Han kallade på torsdagen Monica Lewinsky tillbaka till vittnesbäset. Och cirkusen kunde fortsätta.

Varje tevekanal har fyllts av rapportering om Clinton och Lewinsky, andra nyheter har i bästa fall fått plats som korta telegram. Det är dock inte de politiska och juridiska konsekvenserna som dominerat. Det som diskuteras är huruvida presidenten valt slips för att påverka den unga praktikanter och om presidentparet kan reparera sitt förhållande (åtskilliga äktenskapsrådgivare har suttit i tevesofforna).

Amerikanerna tittar på, men gör det av allt att döma med viss skepsis. Presidentens popularitetsiffror ligger på över 70 procent. Människor anser att han gör ett gott jobb och att Starrs undersökningar ska ta slut.

Det går, stöd till trots, dock inte att bortse från att presidenten ligger illa till. För den elake är det därför en händelse som ser ut som en tanke att presidenten nu rövt i stormen ger order om bombningar av utländska mål.

Misstankarna om tvivelaktiga

motiv förtas av att aktionen har

republikanernas stöd, men att de

fins visar, om inget annat, det

allvarliga i att Lewinskyaffären fatt dominera dagordningen i USA.

Det råder ingen tvékan om att terrorism kan utgöra ett hot mot internationell fred och säkerhet; det har bland annat fastslagits av

säkerhetsrådet i anledning av sanktionerna mot Libyen.

Någon större anledning att ifrågasätta USA:s bevekelsegrunder finns inte heller. Washington lägger bevis för att de attackerade grupperna var inblandade i bombdåden mot ambassaderna i Kenya och Tanzania, de sägs ha angript amerikanska mål tidigare, varav på väg att skaffa ke-

miska vapen och planera nya terrorråd.

I ideallistiskt och enligt lagboken, är det FN:s säkerhetsråd som ska besluta om militära insatser. Av allt att döma var den utvägen dock stängd, att ta upp sakerhetsrådet i anledning av sanktionerna mot Libyen.

Någon större anledning att ifrågasätta USA:s bevekelsegrunder finns inte heller. Washington lägger bevis för att de attackerade grupperna var inblandade i bombdåden mot ambassaderna i Kenya och Tanzania, de sägs ha angript amerikanska mål tidigare, varav på väg att skaffa ke-

gan vad alternativet är i kampen mot hänsynslösa terrorister.

BOMBARNA

Expressen 22/8-98

Det är frestande att dra paralleller mellan USA:s bombning av Afghanistan och Sudan och filmen "Wag the Dog".

Den fiktiva historien om hur en amerikansk president iscensätter ett krig för att avleda uppmärksamheten från en solig sexskandal företräder visserligen likheter med president Clintons nuvarande situation. Men verkligheten är sällan lika välregisserad som Hollywoods produktioner.

Den tidigare nämnda filmen "Wag the Dog" och den Sverige-aktuella "Spelets regler" är båda mer eller mindre löst baserade på Bill Clinton och hans presidentskap. Ronald Reagan hade redan lämnat sina insatser i filmens värld bakom sig när han 1986 i rollen som amerikansk president gav order om att bomba Libyen.

DET FINNS LIKHETER

mellan händelserna för tolv år sedan och torsdagens attack mot misstänkta terroristmål. I båda fallen

var de amerikanska bombningarna en reaktion på tidigare bombdåd riktade mot USA och utfördes i ett försök att desamerna terrorismen.

Bombningen i Libyen hade dock föregåtts av en längre tids uppträppning och en debatt om det riktiga i ett sådant handlande. Torsdagens attack kom plötsligt och oväntat. Och det är inte den enda olikheten. Den kanske mest markanta skillnaden ligger i västvärldens reaktioner.

1986 fördömdes Europas ledare – med undantag av Reagans bundsförvant, Margaret Thatcher – unisont vad man menade vara ett amerikanskt övergrepp.

Sveriges dåvarande utrikesminister Sten Andersson varnade för en väldspiral och menade att USA:s attack var en "krigshandling".

I GÅR VAR DEN svenska inställningen den motsatta. Utrikesminister Lena Hjelm-Wallén reagerade snabbt och uttalade – med vissa reservationer – sitt stöd för de amerikanska bombningarna i Afghanistan och Sudan. Det var hon inte ensam om. Det kalla kriget är numera historia och maktbalansen förändrad vilket gör det enklare för västvärlden att ta ställning för det amerikanska agerandet.

Terrorism måste bekämpas. USA menar att hotbilden i torsdags var så akut att den krävde ett ingripande. Men det finns goda skäl att ifrågasätta huruvida den amerikanska tolkningen av FN-stadgans 51:a artikel – som handlar om rätten till självförsvar – ger tillräckligt stöd för handlingarna. Våld föder dessutom våld och risken för vedergällning är överhängande.

Det är bara att hoppas att bombningarna hade ett viktigare syfte än att fungera som inrikespolitisk avledningsmanöver. Och att FN kan enas i en ansträngning att bekämpa terrorismen.



Clinton

Reagan

– Talibanerna ville

Malmöbon Sidney Petersson berättar från

● – Sjukhuset är fullt av krigsskada. Tanks, kanoner och lastbilar fulla med talibankrigare rullar mot fronten några mil utanför staden. Vi själva har en svår koleraepidemi att brotta med i Baghlan-provinsen tre timmar bort. Och så detta med de amerikanska bombningarna av Osama bin Ladens terroristbaser.

Sidney Petersson, 60, Malmöbo och regionsansvarig för Svenska Afghanistan-kommitténs (SAK) biståndsverksamhet i landets norra delar, ger i ett samtal med AN:s medarbetare över satellittelefon en dramatisk skildring av händelserna i krigets centrum.

Han är en av de sista västerlänningarna som är kvar i världens mest krigsfördda och lidande land och befinner sig instängd i

den lilla staden Taloqan 350 km nordost om Kabul utan möjligheter att ta sig ut.

– Vi hoppades kunna ta oss ut över Oxys floden i i Tadzhikistan men kriget har flammat upp också där så vi tvängades ge upp.

Han känner sig ”något så närsäker” och säger att det inte går någon nöd på varken honom eller hans afghanska medarbetare.

Stämningen spänd
Men stämningen i Taloqan är spänd. Staden har förvandlats till ett centrum för talibaneernas uppladdning inför slutförfesten mot de förra regeringsstyrkorna i Badakshan-provinsen och ser ut som ett arméläger. Gamla ryska tanks rasslar fram på gatorna, truppförstärkningar anländer ideligen och

den lokala befolkningen är vett-skrämd och vägar sig knappt ut.

Strider rasar i staden Farkhar och i Keshem-dalen och t o m golven i sjukhuset är fulla med skadade talibaneer.

– I morgon kommer talibaneledare till mig och krävde att få allt vad vi hade av medicin och bandage, säger Sidney Petersson. Och inte nog med det, dom ville få mig att leverera det vid själva fronten. Jag vägrade förstås, vår medicin är för lokalfolkningen, för kvinnor och barn. Det var några laddade minuter innan dom gav upp.

Talibane tog över kontoret

Det är bara en av många konfrontationer som Sidney Petersson, nu inne på sitt tredje år i Afghanistan, upplevt den senaste veckan. När

ta all vår medicin

Arbetet Nyheterna 23/8-98
krigets centrum i norra Afghanistan

han anlände till Mazar-i-Sharif i torsdags hade talibaneerna beslagtagit över SAK:s biståndskontor. På gatan utanför höll de på med att rensa gatan från lik som fraktades bort med lastbilar.

– Jag kan inte avgöra om de stupat i strider eller avrävats, säger han. Jag säger att det var många. Stämningen blev mycket hotfull när jag försökte få talibaneerna att ge tillbaka byggnaden. En taliban ändrar sig aldrig sågs det och det går inte att resonera med dem. Det stämmer nog. Mina afganska kollegor fick gå emellan och jag gav upp.

Massarresteringar

Han bekräftar ryktena om massarresteringar av etniska minoriteter, mest hazaras och uzbeker, i

staden.

– I förra veckan greps mer än 10 000. Många har släppts efter hårdare förhör men talibaneerna tar hela tiden i folk. Vi kände oss heller inte säkra. Det fanns talibane som kastade sten efter mig och vi hade bara att ge oss iväg medan tid var.

Jobbar som vanligt

Medan alla utlämningar i Pakistan uppmanas att ”göra sig osynliga” jobbar Sidney Petersson som vanligt. Direkt efter ankomsten till Taloqan gjorde han nya försök att få landningsställstånd för ett flygplan med katastrofhjälp åt koleraoffren i Baghlan. Tre flygplatser var möjliga men talibaneerna vägrade öppna någon av dem. Jag för ned i går med närlösning,

men det räcker bara några dagar. Många kommer att dö och man känner sig maktlös.

På lördagen kom talibaneerna med nya krv.

– Dom ville ha uppgifter på vära anständliga etniska tillhörighet och politiska bakgrund och det kan jag självklart inte ge dem. Vi hade en lång palaver och jag är rädd att dom kommer tillbaka. Oron för mina afganska vänners säkerhet är det värsta.

Hat mot utlämningar

De amerikanska bombningarna har ökat talibaneernas misstänksamhet och kanske också hat mot utlämningar och icke-muslimer.

– Visst känns det, säger Sidney Petersson.

Han övernattar på SAK:s kon-



Sidney Petersson, 60, är en av de sista västerlänningarna som är kvar i det krigsfördda Afghanistan.

tor, har en kortvågsradio där man lyssnar på BBC:s sändningar på dari och han har sin satellittelefon. Väl gömd och avstånd under större delen av dagen.

– Talibaneerna tar den förstås om dom upptäcker den...



Bo Gunnarsson

President Clinton slår till

Det måste finnas möjligheter för stater att ingripa mot fredshotande terrorister

Efter att ha tvingats hålla ett tevänt tal till nationen om sin relation med Monica Lewinsky kunde president Bill Clinton knappast undgå kritik för sitt agerande i kölvattnet av terrorattackerna i Kenya och Tanzania.

Det här, låt vara med snabbt sjunkande intensitet, sägs att bombningarna av mål i Sudan och Afghanistan genomfördes för att avleda uppmärksamheten från Lewinsky och specialetaklagnären Kenneth Starr. Hade presidenten däremot valt att hålla en låg profil skulle uppörda röster hörts om alltför stor passivitet. Det hade setts som ett tecken på att Vita huset var uppstaget av annat, att fokus riktades inåt samtidigt som amerikanska liv var i fara.

Nu valde Clinton att slå till. På hemmaplan pekar bedömare på risker för att attackerna kan visa sig motverka sitt syfte, att de enbart leder till en upptrappad våldsspiral. Rysslands president Boris Jeltsin säger sig vara "mycket upprörd", i Libyen ledde Muammar Khaddafi en antiamerikansk demonstration, i Teheran hörs anklagelser om att USA är den största terroristen.

Från västledda och allierade kommer dock stöd. Storbritanniens Tony Blair förkollar exempelvis att han "helt och fullt" stöder aktionen. Även inrikespolitiskt har Clinton fått nyckelaktörer på sin sida, politiska motståndare som representanthustestamentarier. Newt Gingrich sluter upp bakom presidenten. Washington

Post hävdar till och med att USA inte bara hade "rätt" att ingripa utan också en "skyldighet".

I Sverige tycktes regeringen bli tagen på stången. I de första kommentarerna nämnades de amerikanska bombningarna inte alls, all skuld lades på terroristerna. Något senare började reserverna komma. Sverige hade heist sett att arbetet skötts genom FN, Lena Hjelm-Wallén framförde principiella betänkligheter och varnade i fredagens Lunchelet för en utveckling där "landet tar rätt i sina egna händer". Men, slog utrikesministern samtidigt fast, "i en situation när inget annat fungerar, då måste dessvärre också stater möta våld med våld".

Bakom Sveriges framlande kan ligga att regeringen anser att det internationella systemet stundtals är alltför trubbigt och tungt, att det bör finnas möjligheter att slå tillbaka mot allvarliga hot även om de formella spelreglerna inte följs till punkt och pricka.

Det har hänt förr. I mitten av 1970-talet kapades ett israeliskt passagerarplan av palestinska terrorister och landade på Entebbe flygplatsen i Uganda. Inget gjordes för att få gisslan fri; deas liv var i fara. Israeliska myndigheter igangsatte då en väpnad räddningsaktion på ugandiskt territorium.

Den svenska regeringen hade

formella invändningar men för-

domde aldrig själva insatnen, trots att den svärta kunde förenas med en strikt tolkning av FN-

stadgan. Sverige, liksom många andra stater, ansåg uppenbarligen att det bör finnas en gräzön inom vilken normalt sett illegala handlingar kan tolereras.

Något annämningsvärt är att regeringen i de inledande kom-

mentarerna till bombräderna i Afghanistan och Sudan uttryckte förståelse för USA:s argument att det hela skett i självtörstar enligt artikel 5. År Sverige på väg att frångå en mångårig praxis? Att tolkningen av självförsvarsrätten är så snäv som möjlig har länge ansetts ligga i ett litet land's intresse. Det minskar risken för att stater, som utrikesministern varnade för, "tar rätt i sina egna händer". En inte obetydlig del av världen anser att det är tillräckligt att andra världskriget har efter det andra världskriget skett av världsvärkaren ansetts vara i självförsvar.

Rättsligt sett gar det att håvda att USA befann sig i en nödsituation och därfor var tvunget att slå till. Här finns en utväg som dock förutsätter att klara bevis kan presenteras för att nya terrordåd var nära, förstående. Hotet måste vara överhängande. Det får inte röra sig om ren bestraffning.

Enligt presidenten är bevisen övertygande. En nyckelfråga är om han har rätt.

I idealfallet borde ärendet ha väckts i FN:s säkerhetsråd som, också i idealfallet, hade auktorisering att handla. Men i realiteten har den amerikanska världssamväldet, Terrorism är ett hot mot internationell fred och säkerhet, och rådet kan därmed ingripa ned tvangsgärder.

Verkligheten i den internationella politiken är dock en annan.

Hur stor är sannolikheten att Ryssland och Kina ställt sig bakom en resolution?

Den gräzön inom vilken an-

grepp mot fredshöftande terrorister kan genombras måste vara li-

ten. Men den måste finnas.

USA förklarar krig mot terrorismen.



TECKNING: CHRISTOPHE VORLET/lnx

Clinton vill strypa bin Ladens tillgångar

23/8-98

► Vi är beredda på en utdragen kamp, sade president Bill Clinton i sitt sedvanliga lördagsstal i radion från semesterön där han återvänt efter ett dygn i Washington.

Han utfärdade skarpa var

Pakistan anklagas för samarbete med USA

PAKISTAN. Pakistans regering pressas nu av militära och religiösa ledare om sin roll innan USA genomförde sina hämndanfall mot misstänkta terroristmål i torsdags. Stora delar av den muslimska världen är i uppror.

USA:s robotanfall mot Afghanistan och Sudan krävde minst 30 liv. Sudan lovade på söndagen att bevisa att USA lög om kemvapenämnen i en läkemedelsfabrik.

Den förra pakistanska överbefälhavaren Mirza Aslam Beg anklagade i ett uttalande på söndagen regeringen i Islamabad för att ha tillåtit USA:s underrättelseorgan att arbeta från pakistanskt territorium i syfte att spåra den islamiska extremistledaren Osama bin Laden. Beg krävde att premiärminister Nawaz Sharif avslöjar vilket slags samarbete Pakistan hade med USA före anfallet med kryssningsrobotar mot vad som sades vara utbildningsläger för terrorgrupper i östra Afghanistan.

Aven andra höga pakistanska militärer kräver att sanningen kommer fram. De påpekar att kryssningsrobotarna och de fartyg vilka avfyrade dem kränkte pakistanskt territorium. Enligt tidningen The Muslim hade antingen radarsystemet störts eller så utfördes anfallet med den pakistanska regeringens vetskaps.

Enligt diplomater i Islamabad är det dock osannolikt att den pakistanska regeringens vänskap med västmakterna skulle skadas av robotanfallen, rapporterade nyhetsbyrån Reuters. Därför har man inte fördömt dem. En odetonerad robot med amerikanska nationalitetsbezeichningar har hittats i en avlägsen del av provinsen Baluchistan, sade statstjänsteman i Quetta i sydvästra Pakistan på söndagen. Fyndplatsen ligger nära det område där Pakistan sprängde sina kärnvapen i maj.

Attentaten mot USA:s ambassader i Kenya och Tanzania, i vilka 257 personer dödades, var de första i en serie på minst tre terrorråd. Det hävdade general Henry Shelton, USA:s överbefälhavare, på söndagen.

Islamiska konferensen OIC fördömdes på söndagen USA:s angrepp mot misstänkta terroristmål. Samtidigt uttalades stöd för Sudans protest till FN:s säkerhetsråd efter USA:s robotanfall mot läkemedelsfabriken al-Shifa som misstänktes tillverka substanser till nervgasen VX.

Säkerhetsrådet träffas bakom lyckta dörrar på måndagen för att dryfta Sudans protest. **DN 23/8-98 TT-AFP**

Två pakistanska män har gripits för mordet på en italiensk FN-tjänsteman i Kabul i fredags. Männena kommer att ställas inför rätta vid en islamisk domstol. Det sade talibanernas högste ledare mulla Mohammed Omar på lördagen. **DN 23/8-98 TT-AFP**

Militärövning nära Afghanistan

IRAN. Iran förbereder en militär manöver med 70 000 soldater längs den afghanska gränsen. Orsaken är de stora spänningarna mellan Teheran och den islamiska talibanmilisen.

– Det är uppenbart att dessa övningar har ett samband med vad som händer i regionen, sade general Rahim Savafi, befälhavare för revolutionsgardet.

Han hänvisade till talibanernas framryckningar i Afghanistan under de senaste veckorna. Dessa har lett till att talibanerna kontrollerar nästan hela landet. Enligt generalen blir det den största militära manöver som hållits i landets nordöstra region. Han angav ingen exakt tidpunkt för övningen, men sade att den ska hållas under de närmaste dagarna. Tillkännagivandet om övningen kom sedan Iran utfärdat en rad varningar till talibanerna och till Pakistan, som Teheran anklagar för att stödja den fundamentalistiska milisen. **TT-AFP**

ningar om att alla som ”ägnar sig åt terrorism är sårbara”, och väldade till resten av världen att strypa den misstänkta terrorledaren Osama bin Ladens tillgångar.

Utvärdering fortsätter

Utvärderingen av torsdagskvällens bombningar fortsätter, men efter de första konstaterandena om framgångar

frangår nu att Pentagon och CIA fortfarande är osäkra på hur allvarliga skadorna blev i träningslägren i Afghanistan. Efterräkningarna är pågått med bl a krav från Sudan på ekonomisk kompensation efter ödeläggelsen.

Grusprover från Sudan

Clinton säkerhetspolitiska rådgivare lade fram det bevismaterial som pekar mot bin Ladens terrorismärverk i bakgrundssamtal med kongressledamöter. Den republikanske senatorn Gordon Smith sade efteråt: ”Det framstod kristallklart att terrormen tilltagit mot oss”. Bland material sägs

vitala beståndsdelar i bin Ladens organisation. Under de år som gått sedan bombattentatet mot World Trade Center i New York 1993 har den amerikanska antiterrorlagstiftningen grundssamtal med kongressledamöter. Den republikanske senatorn Gordon Smith sade efteråt: ”Det framstod kristallklart att terrormen tilltagit mot oss”. Bland material sägs

finnas grusprover från denke- miska fabriken i Sudan, vilka ska uppvisas på avännen som används i nervgas, samt utför- liga vittnesmål från män som gripits i Nairobi och Dar-es- Salaam.

Meningen var att slå till mot

USA:s organisation. Under de år som gått sedan bombattentatet mot World Trade Center i New York 1993 har den amerikanska antiterrorlagstiftningen grundssamtal med kongressledamöter. Den republikanske senatorn Gordon Smith sade efteråt: ”Det framstod kristallklart att terrormen tilltagit mot oss”. Bland material sägs

Ambition att krossa

Han citerar akademiker som konstaterar att amerikaner, som betraktar sitt eget land som konsernativt, bör inse att USA uppfattas som ”revolu- tionär” utomlands med arro- ganta ambitioner att krossa an- dra kulturer – t ex de hierar- häller att Clintons ställning skulle te sig ännu svagare om han inte gjort någonting efter

ambassadbombningarna.

KARIN HENRIKSSON

Tidningen New York Times utrikeskommentator Thomas Friedman förklarar i lördagsnumret att USA:s fiender idag inte utgörs av supermakter, utan av ”supergaga män”. Han citerar akademiker som konstaterar att amerikaner, som betraktar sitt eget land som konsernativt, bör inse att USA uppfattas som ”revolu- tionär” utomlands med arro- ganta ambitioner att krossa an- dra kulturer – t ex de hierar- häller att Clintons ställning skulle te sig ännu svagare om han inte gjort någonting efter



bin Laden: Jag ska följa lagen

Men nytt hot per fax bara timmarna efter – avsänt från Pakistan

Arbeteet 25/8 - 98

• Afghanistan talibane är både oroade och skakade över de amerikanska bombningarna av terrorbastärna i Khost och försäkrade på måndagen att den saudiarabiske miljardären Osama bin Laden lovat att inte vidta militära aktioner mot något trede land så länge han åtnjuter deras gästfrihet.

– Jag godtar er överhöghet och kommer att följa era lagar, uppgräv s bin Laden ha sagt i ett budskap till talibaneernas mystiske ledare, mullah Omar.

Beskedet kom mindre än ett dygn efter det att mullah Omar i ett uttalande till en pakistansk tidning klagat över bin Ladens aktiviteter och antytt att han höll på att skapa en parallell myndighet eller en stat i staten.

Mer än ett spel

Det här är sannolikt mer än ett spel för galenhet eftersom mullah Omar redan tidigare gjort försök att lägga band på mannen som Washington i dag ser som "världens farligaste terrorist" men som i den islamska världen blivit något av en kultfigur efter torsdagens misslyckte.

Men det förändrar foga, och bara timmarna senare uppgav en militär rörelse i London, "al Mujahiroun", att man fått ett fax från bin Ladens rörelse "Internationella Fronten för Heligt krig mot USA och Israel" (IIF) som varnade USA för att militära muslimer redan mobiliseras för att sätta till "utan medkam och med våld" mot fyra kategorier av mål.

Pakistan

Faxet har varit från Peshawar, en islamsk smältdel i Pakistan, och uppgäv att man skulle sätta till mot passagerarfartyg, hindra säker passage för handelsfartyg, angripa och ockupera ambassader och tvänga amerikanska och israelska företag och banker att sättas igång.

Hotet mot västerländningar i Pakistan understörs ytterligare på måndagen då det avslöjades att religiösa ledare i Swatdalen, en av landets mest kända turistattraktorer, gett regeringen 24 timmar att evakuera 100-tals utländningar.



Anno har inga bilder från mälet för USA:s attacken i Afghanistan nätt västvärlden, men från den bombade fabriken i Sudan har en del bilder nätt ut. Här tittar en grupp sudaneser på delar av en USA-robotbomba efter träffen.

Foto: ALADDIN ABDEL

– Vi kommer att döda alla som är kvar, sa ledande mullor vid det massmöte på söndagen i Saidi Sharif där många ungdomar lovade att offra sina liv för att beskydda Osama bin Laden.

Evakueringen av utländningar har redan inlett sedan flygbolaget PIA uppgrävt en luftbrot till huvudstaden Islamabad.

Hotet kan vara en dödsstöt för turismen i Pakistan, en nation som redan väcktar på randen till ekonomisk kollaps.

Med all säkerhet kan också s bin Laden räkna med talibaneernas

stöd och skydd om och när det verkligen hettat till.

Utåt sett har talibaneerna alltid framstått som en homogen grupp men i själva verket finns det flera fraktioner och stora meningsskillnader som kommer att bli allt större nu då man behärskar i stort sett hela landet.

Krigshjälte

Alla ser den saudiarabiske magnaten som en hjälte från kriget mot Sovjetunionens röda armé och som en hängiven islamist och hedersgäst i landet. De religiösa zelo-

terna vill gärna exportera sin form av islam och beundrar honom för att han vågat stå upp mot den enda supermakten. Å

andra sidan strävar de mer reformvänliga falangerna efter internationellt erkännande, plats i FN:s generalförsamling, ekonomiskt bistånd och en viss "normalisering".

I stället hotar nu s bin Laden

aktiviteter att ytterligare isolera

det krigsförödda landet som en "terroriststat".

Pakistans regering varnade på måndagen alla utländska diplomater från att besöka Peshawar och den nordvästra gränsprovin- sen.

Samtidigt beslöt man att sätta till mot "ilegala immigranter", vilket i det här sammanhanget betyder araber och helige krigare. Rörelsefriheten inskränks också för de minst 1,2 miljoner aghafaner som lever i flyktingläger i provin- sen.



Bo Gunnarsson



**Usama
bin Ladin**

AFGHANISTAN

Inga spår efter bin Ladin

ISLAMABAD, TT-REUTERS

► Plötsligt finns det inga spår efter Usama bin Ladin, den landsflyktige saudiske miljöären som USA anklagar för

att vara hjärnan bakom ambassadbombningarna i Kenya och Tanzania. Hans beskyddare tiger alltjämt, trots förra veckans amerikanska robot-

angrepp mot vad som antogs vara bin Ladins utbildningsläger i Afghanistan.

bin Ladin, som av många muslimer i regionen betraktas som en islamistisk krigshjälte, har gått under jorden. Hans beskyddare bland talibanerna ger inte många ledtrådar, trots att det finns en del tecken på irritation.

— Vi vet inte var han finns, sade en erfaren Afghanistan-kännare i Pakistans huvudstad Islamabad på fredagen.

— Vivetinte ens om han lever eller är död.

Uttalanden från Afghanistan tyder dock på att han är oskadd efter robotanfallen. Dessa föranledes av USA:s övertygelse om att han var hjärnan bakom de båda ambassadbombningarna i Nairobi och Dar es Salaam den 7 augusti då 263 människor dödades. bin Ladin har låtit meddela att han inte har någon som helst skuld när det gäller de båda attentaten.

Faktum är dock att en man som förhördes i New York i torsdags för delaktighet i Nairobi-attentatet har erkänt att han fått sin utbildning i Afghanistan av Qaeda, en grupp som leds av bin Ladin.

Gamla vapenbröder

Om de amerikanska robotanfallen får talibanerna att ta vänskapen med bin Ladin under omprövning är oklart.

Det verkar dock som om talibanernas högste ledare, mulla Mohammad Omar, är något irriterad på sin gamle vapenbröder från kriget mot de sov-

jetiska styrkorna på 80-talet. Av en intervju i en pakistansk

tidning i veckan framgick att bin Ladin har uppmanats att hålla tyst och sluta uttala hotelser mot USA medan han befinner sig i Afghanistan. Det finns bara utrymme för en regering och en ledare i Afghanistan, klargjorde mullan.

Obekräftade uppgifter gör gällande att talibanerna för säkerhets skull håller bin Ladin under bevakning så att han inte ska göra något mer som kan bli besvärande för Afghanistan. Från amerikansk sida genmäler man att man har hört allt detta förut och inte vet vad man ska tro.

Okänd ledare

I realiteten vet USA ganska lite om den afghanske ledaren mulla Mohammad Omar som har sitt högkvarter i Kandahar i söder. Ingen amerikansk diplomat har någonsin träffat honom, och chanserna att det skulle ske nu verkar små.

Mulla Omar tros vara närmare 40 år, har särats i strid fyra gånger de senaste 20 åren och är blind på ena ögat. Efter förra veckans robotanfall har han klargjort att det inte finns något kvar att tala med USA om. Vid hans enda officiella framträdande efter missilattacken sade han att USA borde lämna området kring Persiska viken, ett krav som bin Ladin har framfört gång på gång.

Misstänkt förhördes

Tar på sig del av skuld: En domstol i New York höll ett inledande förhör i går med jordanierne Mohammed Saddiq Odeh, som misstänks för medverkan i sprängningen av USA:s ambassad i Nairobi. I åtalet mot Odeh står att den internationella terroristgruppen Qaeda planerade och genomförde sprängningarna av ambassaderna i Nairobi och Dar es Salaam den 7 augusti. Även en jemenitisk medborpare som greps i Kenya har förhörts i USA.

Odeh greps i Karachi i Pakistan. Han är medlem i Qaeda, och tar därfor på sig del av skulden för sprängdådet i Nairobi, men säger sig inte direkt ha deltagit i själva attacken: Qaeda leds av Usama bin Ladin. AP

Ny missil hittad i Pakistan

SVD 31/8-98

Islamabad: Ännu en amerikansk Tomahawk-robot hittades i lördags i sydvästra Pakistan. Vapenexperter desarmrade kryssningsroboten som inte hade detonerat. Den avfyrades i förra veckan mot mål i Afghanistan, och ingick i den attack som USA riktade mot vad som tros vara terrorläger.

Det var civilpersoner som upptäckte roboten i Mekrands distriket i provinsen Baluchistan. I måndags gjordes liknande fynd i Kharan-distriktet i Baluchistan. Armén desarmerade även den roboten. Pakistan har protesterat inför FN:s säkerhetsråd mot att USA kränkt landets luftrum. TT-REUTERS

Den afghanska talibanmilisen angrep på söndagen oppositionens styrkor i Kapisa-provinsen i norr och erövrade staden Nejrab, en av krigsherren Ahmed Shah Massouds viktigaste fästen. Det rapporterade den Pakistanbaserade afghanska nyhetsbyrån AIP. TT-AFP SVD 31/8-98

Stormanöver vid gränsen

SVD 29-98

IRAN: Minst 70 000 iranska soldater deltar i en stormanöver som på tisdagen inleddes vid gränsen mot Afghanistan. Manövern hålls samtidigt som spänningen mellan de båda länderna ökar.

Den statliga iranska televisionen visade på tisdagen bilder då revolutionsgardets befälhavare, generalmajor Yahya Ramin Safavi, inledde manövern med en stor parad. Talibanmilisen, som kontrollerar stora delar av Afghanistan, har varnat Iran för att ladda upp militärt i gränsområdet. Iran vägrar godkänna talibanregimen som Afghanistans lagliga regering. Teheran hävdar istället att den störtade presidenten Burhanuddin Rabani är Afghanistans lagliga härskare. DN TT-Reuters

Saudier finansierade talibaner

London: Den saudiska regeringen har i hemlighet finansierat talibanmilisen i Afghanistan. Det hävdar en saudisk forskare i en studie återgiven i Londontidningen The Independent på onsdagen. Forskaren citerar en tidigare högt uppställt pakistansk tjänsteman. Denne säger att USA "bidrog med vapen och kunskap, saudierna med pengar och vi med utbildningsläger åt de islamiska legionerna i början av 1980-talet och sedan åt talibanerna".

The Independent citerade ur en rapport av saudiern Nawaf Obaid, skriven då han studerade vid John F Kennedy-skolan för statsförvaltning i USA. Studien har senare också fått stöd av USA:s utrikesdepartement.

Rapporten innehåller kritik mot USA:s dåliga kunskaper om Saudiariabien: "Amerikanska analytiker har underskattat, nonchalerat eller missförstått karaktären, styrkan och målen i Wahab-rörelsen i Saudiariabien, och i vilken grad de världsliga ledarna står i tacksamhetsskuld till denna grupp."

Wahabism är en puristisk inriktning av islam förkunnad av Mohammed bin Abdul Wahab. Den religiösa polisen i Afghanistan tillhör denna riktning enligt studien. TT-AFP

SVD 3/9-98

Tusentals avrättade av Afghanistans talibander

Hjälparbetare chockad – ”etnisk rensning av värsta sort”

Anhöret Nyheterna 5/9 - 98

● Fyra veckor efter talibannernas blixtoffensiv i norr och erövringen av huvudstaden Mazar-i-Sharif så har onvärldens värsta fäthågor bekräftats. Enligt en ny rapport från Amnesty International avrättades och dödades tusentals män i under tre dagars blodbad då de heliga krigarna i Allahs namn utkrävde vederläggning för massakrer de själva utsattes för i fjol våras.

Folkord

– Det som hänt får alla övergrepp mot civilbefolkningen i Käffbul och kvinnoförtrycket att förbänka, säger en av de få hjälparbetare som besökt staden efter blodbadet i AN. De ögonvittnesskildringar som han själv hörde under ett dygn i Mazar sammankalver väl med Amnesty Internationals larmrapport och själv tvekar han inte.

– Det är ett folkmord och en etnisk rensning av värsta sort, säger han. Folk sa att hela familjer av hazaras, en etnisk minoritet som är shia-muslimer, utplånats under dagarna 8–10 augusti. Han kastar också yttre-

gare hus över de tio försvarningsdiplomaternas öde.

– En man som vi mötte utanför sjukhuset berättade att de fängslats tillsammans med en iransk journalist från nyhetssyran Iran och att de därför drängt fört till en skoldagen där de sköts ihjäl...

Talibanner själva förmökar all kämmdom om diplomaternas öde och blodbadet på hazaras med motivering om att ”vår religion förbjuder dödande av civila”.

Transk militär

I förlängningen hotar massakern och mordet på diplomaterna att leda till att Iran vidtar militära åtgärder. Vapenskrumlet har inletts med en stormanöver med 70 000 man, bland dem flera elitförband, omödelbart intill gränsen. Det är ohyliga skildringar som återges i Amnesty Internationals larm om blodbadet i norra Afghanistan. Omödelbart efter det Mazar fallit spärrades hela landskändan av för journalister och utländska observatörer. Uthålliga uppmuntrades att överlämna sina vapen i median ha-

hinderas av otaliga vägspärningar där alla hazaras grips. Barn och kvinnor uppges ha sänts till Sarshali-lägret.

Krav från Amnesty

Flyktingströmmen hin dras av otaliga vägspärningar där alla hazaras grips. Barn och kvinnor uppges ha sänts till Sarshali-lägret.

– Sälv såg jag massor av blodiga skjortor och skor utanför sjukhuset i Mazar där Internationella Röda Korset tvingats begravta många i massgravar, säger hjälparbetaren till AN.

Han bekräftar också uppgifterna om en masgrav vid flickskolan Sultan Razich in i stan.

Fick förblöda till döds

I en by nära Hairatan vid gränsen till Uzbekistan avrättades 70 män inför 100-tals tybor genom en sköhal-ritual. Likt boskap skars halvren ån nägösin tidigare, säger hjälparbetaren. De hänvisar till att de kommer från Kandahar – nullah Omars hemort – och att de inte tar order av någon.

Bo Gunnarsson
text

Häftiga strider norr om Kabul

KABUL. Efter en artilleriduell som varade hela natten satte den styrande talibangriffen i Afghanistan in stridsflyg mot motståndsstyrkorna norr om huvudstaden Kabul. Men hittills har talibana varken vunnit eller förlorat någon mark, uppgav en talibansoldat utanför den belägrade huvudstaden. Just nu pågår också en maktkamp mellan talibangriffen och grannlandet Iran. Iran anklagar talibana för att hålla flera iranier som befann sig i Mazar-Sharif när talibana erövrade staden i augusti. **DN 5/9-98 /FLT-AP**

Bombmissänkt anklagar pakistansk polis för tortyr

Washington: En av de två som grips för bombattentat mot USA:s ambassad i Nairobi, hävdar att utredare i Pakistan tvangade honom att erkänna. Mohamed Sadeek Odeh, som har utlämnats för åtal i USA, hävdar att de pakistanska utredarna i tre dygn vägrade ge honom mat och dryck och hindrade honom att sova. Till slut gav han upp och avgav en falsk bekänelse, skrev Washington Post på fredagen.

Den 33-åriga Odeh har dock även nu medgivit att han ingick i den terroranklagade sandierns Usama bin Ladins grupp, sade Odehs advokat i USA Jack Sachsen i Washington Post. Odehs påstådda bekännelse i Pakistan var viktigt då det gällde att bevisa att bin Ladins ligg bakom bombockningarna. USA svarade med att bomba mål i Sudan och Afghanistan.

Källor inom Pakistans underrättelsetjänst hargett en helt annan beskrivning av Odehs bekännelse. De påstår att han skröt om att han gett bombarna tekniskt och praktiskt stöd. De sade att han förlitade sig på deras sympati i egenskap av muslimer. **TT-REUTERS SVD 5/9-98**



AFGHANISTAN. Den talibanska islamisterna dödade tusentals civila efter det att Mazar-i-Sharif i norra Afghanistan erövrades från oppositionen den 8 augusti, rapporterade mänskerrättsorganisationen Amnesty International på torsdagen. Amnesty har fått uppgifterna om massakern från ögonvittnen och från anhöriga till offren.

"Talibanska vakter dödade avsiktligt och systematiskt tusentals civila häxer under det tre första dagarna efter erövringen av Mazar-i-Sharif den 8 augusti", hette det i ett Amnesty-meddelande till Reuters-kontor i Islamabad. Talibanaerna har sedanmera stängt området för utländska medier och oberoende observatörer, tillades det.

Amnesty rapporterade också att tio iranska diplomater och en iransk journalist, som försynt är i Afghanistan sannolikt är dödla.

De dödades sannolikt då talibansk gerilla gick in på det iranska konsulatet i Mazar-i-Sharif, sade en talesman för Amnesty i Pakistans huvudstad Islamabad.

TT-Reuters

Iran tillbakavisar anfallsplan

TEHERAN. Irans högste ledare, ayatolla Ali Khamenei, är inte beredd att ingripa militärt mot Afghanistan, skriver tisdagen Tehran Times på söndagen. Utalandet kommer samtidigt som amerikanska försvärskällor gör gällande att Iran förbereder ett anfall mot grannlandet.

Iran har den senaste veckan samlat trupper längs gränsen till Afghanistan i samband med en stor militärövning. Och i helgen hotade Teheran med att vidta "nödvändiga åtgärder" om inte tillfångatagna iranier i Afghanistan friges. /FLT-AP

S. N.
9/9
98

Stor risk för spridning av konflikten i regionen

Årleff Nyhetsmma 6/9-98

● Ett nytt krig är på väg att flamma upp i Afghanistan och det kan vara en fråga om timmar innan Iran invaderar den västra delen av det krigsförbätta landet.

Uppmarschen av 70.000 man med tanks, stridsflyg och tungt artilleri har skett under veckan i sken av en militär manöver och Radio Teheran har redan meddelat att nationen har rätt att angräpa enligt internationell lag.

Krigshotet, som också berättas av källor i Pentagon, hotar att destabilisera hela regionen och kan utlösa en ny, blodig och långvarig konflikt.

Irans främsta syfte tycks vara att erövra staden Herat och omgivande provinser för att ge den anti-talibanska nordaliansen ett nytt fäste i Afghanistan istället för de områden i norr som man förlorade för en månad sedan.

Talibanner hävdar att iranier har släppts

AFGHANISTAN Fem iranier som grips av talibanaerna i Afghanistan har släppts. Det sa en talibansk talesman i går. De fem greps i augusti vid en militär offensiv i provinsen Kandahar. Amnesty International meddelade i går att elva iranier, tio diplomater och en journalist, som försunnit i Afghanistan sannolikt är döda. Međo (TT-Reuters) 4/9-98

Iran förbereder sig för attack mot Afghanistan

man förhindra att talibanaerna i Kandahar har övergått till ett ordkrig de senaste veckorna. Iran anklagar de "gudlösa" afghanska zeloterna för att ha mördat tio diplomater efter intäget i Mazar-i-Sharif den 8 augusti och för folkmord på knappast vägar lita på bybor av annan etnisk tillhörighet som tidigare varit deras fiender.

Amerikanska känner förutser en lång konflikt efter som ingendera sedan anses ha kraften att utdela ett dödande slag.

Stora delar av området består av ren öken och gränsen mellan de båda länderna är undermåligt markrad. Den flera tusen år gamla staden Herat, känd som den afghanska kulturens vaxga, ligger bara 40 km från gränsen och förstördes till stor del redan under den sovjetiska ockupationen på 1980-talet.

BO GUNNARSSON

Förhinderar erkännande
Iran trots invadera med hjälp av forna mujahedins som jagats i exil. Tusentals av dem lever i Mashad-området och över, sa pakistanske Afghanistan-experten Ahmed Rashid i en intervju med brittiska BBC på lördagen.

Tonen mellan Teheran

USA-attack gjorde ringa skada

AFGHANISTAN USA:s motattack mot terroristträningslägren i Afghanistan gjorde så liten skada att de krigsvana afghanerna nu gör narr av de amerikanska vapnen. Det rapporterar Rahimullah Yousfzai, den första journalisten som tillåtts resa i regionen.

USA avlossade ett 30-tal kryssningsrobotar av typen Tomahawk mot vad Washington uppger var träningsplatser för islamistiska terrorister. Lägren styrs enligt USA av den saudiske miljardären Usama bin Laden, som anklagas för sprängningarna av USA:s ambassader i Nairobi och Dar es Salaam förra månaden.

Yousfzai är en respekterad pakistansk journalist och släpptes in i området av talibanaerna. DN 6/9-98 AP



Iran rustar för krig mot Afghanistan

6/9 - 98

Iran förbereder ett anfall mot Afghanistan. 70 000 soldater, attackplan och stridsvagnar stod på lördagen redo på gränsen.

Afghanistan

Talibanerna beväpnar civila inför en attack.

Teheran, Hans Gyllenhammar. Spanningen mellan de muslimska länderna har ökat i samband med de senaste veckorna. Det råder också på gränsen till Afghanistan.

Under de senaste veckorna har de iranska trupperna på gränsen till Afghanistan tyder på att ett anfall förbereds.

► Spänningen mellan länderna är "ovanligt läddad och mycket oroväckande", enligt Sveriges chargé d'affaires i

Teheran till SVD på lördagen. Den ökade spänningen förbereds. Det uppgav källor inom USA:s försvarsledning i lördagens Washington Post.

Vid gränsen till Afghanistan finns nu totalt 70 000 iranska soldater, 25 attackplan, 80

stridsvagnar, två robotartilleripjäser och 60 pansarfordon, enligt USA:s underhållsminister.

Dessutom har ett fullt utrustat fältsjukhus uppstått. Uppladdningsingen under täckmantel av en militärövning.

Militärercentrumet i Teheran till SVD på lördagen. Den ökade spänningen förbereds. Det uppgav källor inom USA:s försvarsledning i lördagens Washington Post.

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Iran föhndra att den fundamentalistiska talibanejregimen expanderar och vinner internationellt erkännande. För att undvika detta vill Iran övera delar av områden som talibanejerna nu kontrollerar.

► **Swagt stöd utifrån** Talibanejerna kontrollerar cirka 90 procent av Afghanistan. Men Iran, flertalet länder i omvärlden samt FN erkänner inte regimmen. Milisen har fördömts för sitt hårdförfarande mot kvinnor och barn. Milisen har fördömts för sitt hårdförfarande mot kvinnor och barn.

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Teheran, Hans Gyllenhammar.

Spanningen mellan de

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talibanejerna. De fördömer

deras intoleranta politik och

behandling av kvinnor. I alla

officiella uppgifter föklaras

att talibanejerna förstör rykten

för islam i världen, sade Hans

Gyllenhammar på telefon från

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Spanningen mellan de

Warning för storkrig runt Iran

Om Iran angriper

Afghanistan väntar

"floder med blods-

utgiutelse och

sköningslös kamp",

värnade talibanerna

på söndagen i en ton

som ytterligare

skärpte spanningen

mellan länderna.

7/9 - 98

GENEVE, SVD

Samtidigt ökade tonen i om-

vädlen för att ett krig mellan

länderna kan leda till regional

konflikt där länder som Pakistan,

Rysland och Turkiet dras

in i aggressionen.

Förhågor om en väpnad kon-

flikt mellan Iran och taliban-

milisen i Afghanistan ökade

när Teheran, förklarade att de

70000 soldater och drygt 150

stridsvagnar som skickats till

gränsen till nordöstra Afgha-

nistan stannar i området. Tal-

iran, som alltjämt har färska minnen av det åtta år långa kriget med Irak som slutade 1988, är berett att inleda ännu en utbragen militär konflikt.

Däremot kan de 1,4 miljoner afghanska flyktingarna i Iran utgöra en utmärkt rekryteringsbaser för antitalibanska militärs, skrev den i flyttelse-rika iranska tidningen Qod på måndagen.

Tidningen avrådde från di-

rektta stridsaktioner mot Af-

ghanistan men manade rege-

ringen att minska de diplo-

matiska kontakerna med Pa-

kistan, som anses stödja

talibanerna i Afghanistan:

Tidningen föreslår bildan-

det av en "politisk front" till-

sammans med Pakistans ärke-

fiende Indien, Ryssland, Tadz-

jikistan, Uzbekistan och Tur-

menistan, som alla uttryckt

oro över talibanerna.

Många västbedömare anser

att det är mycket tveksamt om

banerna svarade med ett hot-
ligheten mot talibanerna upp-
fult utlande om att "en iransk
attack kommer att få en domi-
noeffekt och förvända hela re-
gionen till en klobbix".

Familjär kyr från gränsen
Samtidigt kom rapporter om
att afghanska familjer flydde
från gränsområdet av rädska-
ning. Amerikanska säkerhets-
rädgivaren Samuel Berger
beskrev läget som fylt med
"enorm fientlighet".

Irans högste ledare och
befälhavaren för armén, Ayata-
ullah Ali Khamenei, sade i tors-
dagen att han motstår sig en
militär konfrontation, uppgav
Teheran Times i går. Han häv-
de bestämt att manövern
enbart är en övning, vilket dock
bevisas av flera bedömare.

Samtidigt påpekade västliga mi-
litärer experter att det vore för-
vändande om Iran verkligen gick
till attack. En pågående intern
maktkamp och erfarenheterna
från kriget mot Irak 1980-88
börde avskräcka.

Den akuta orsaken till fient-
ligheten mot talibanerna upp-
fult utlande om att "en iransk
attack kommer att få en domi-
noeffekt och förvända hela re-
gionen till en klobbix".

Religionsmäktikamp
I grund och botten handlar
dock mobiliseringen om myck-
et mer än elva försvarna irani-
er. Konflikten speglar en riva-
lit mellan olika muslimskäf-
ter som vill stärka sitt
inflytande i regionen. Den shi-
itiska regimen i Iran är
mycket oroad över de extrema
sunnitiska talibanernas
militära framgångar. Taliba-
nerna kontrollerar nu nästan
hela Afghanistan, och Iran
fruktar för den shiamuslimska
minoriteten i Afghanistan.

Det finns en växande oro för
att parterna drar med sig allie-

De styr Iran och Afghanistan

Talibanerna, en extrem sunnimuslimsk grupp
som kontrollerar 90 procent av Afghanistan. De
har infört en internationellt hårt kritiseras sträng
muslimsk regim. Det internationella samfundet
betraktar fortfarande den siörtade presidenten
Burhanuddin Rabbani som Afghanistans legitime
ledare. Rabbanis störtades av talibanerna 1996.

Iran styrs sedan juni 1997 av reformvänlige pre-
sidenten Mohammad Khatami som befinner sig i
en maktkamp med islamkonserativa grupper i
samhället måste dock samarbeta med dessa i par-
lamentet. Landets högste ledare är dock ayatollah
Ali Khamenei som också är arméns överbefäl-
havare. SVD

rade i den explosivakonflikten.
Om krig utbryter befaras attta-
libanientliga Ryssland, Turkiet
och de centralasiatiska republi-
kena går in på Irans sida. Bak-
värsg mot en militär konfronta-
tion med talibanerna, sade
Förenade Arabemiraten som
har erkänt nullisen. Amerikanska
UD varnar "grannländerna

från att vidta åtgärder som kan
få konflikten att växa".

-Men ovisshet om vigilardet
eller inte torr jäg att vi är på
ett sätt mot en militär konfronta-
tion med talibanerna, sade
Sadegh Zibakalam, professor i
statuskunskap vid Teheranuniv.

GUNILLA VON HALL

Talibaner vill inleda dialog med Iran

8/9 - 98

AFGHANISTAN SUD

8/9 - 98

Iran tonar ned krigsrisk

DUBAI/TEHERAN, TT-REUTERS
► Iranska massmedier tonade
på måndagen ned farhågorna
för en omedelbart förestående
sammandräbning med
grannlandet Afghanistan.

Värdet av en attack mot
Afghanistans talibane har
minskat till följd av uppgifter
om tio iranska diplomaters död
i Afghanistan; allt tyder på att
de redan är döda. I torsdags
rapporterade Amnesty Interna-
tional att diplomaterna, tillsam-
mans med en journalist från den
iranska nyhetsbyrån Irna, dödades
när talibanerna stormade Irans konsulat i
Mazar-i-Sharif i norra Afghani-
stan. Talibanerna har dock för-
nekat detta och sagt att de be-
höver en vecka på sig för att ta
reda på vad som hänt de iran-
ska diplomaterna.

Många västbedömare anser

att det är mycket tveksamt om

Iran, som alltjämt har färska
minnen av det åtta år långa kri-
get med Irak som slutade 1988,
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Hotfull markering mot Afghanistan

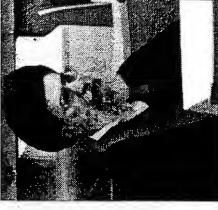
IRAN Den iranska utrikesminis-
tern Kamal Kharrazi säger att
Iran kommer att utnyttja alla
möjligheter att befria iranier
som hålls fängna i Afghanistan.
Han uppmanade de styrande tal-
ibanerna i Afghanistan att frige
iranska fänglar "innan det är för
sent", uppger nyhetsbyrån Irna.

Kharrazi kommentarer stod i
kontrast till uttalanden från
andra iranska ledare som försökt
tona ned farhågorna för ett
iranskt angrepp på Afghanistan.

Metro 10/9 - 98 (TT-Reuters)

Risken för krigshandling fortfarande mycket stor

Anette
7/9 - 9/8
Men Irans ledare är beredd att ge diplomatin en chans



• Ordförande i Iran och Afghanistans harskaste tillbörjan fortsetter men risken för en nära förstående militär invasion tycks ha minskat sedan prästerskapets högste ledare, Ayatollah Khomeini i en tidningsintervju stött tanken på att ge diplomatin en chans.

– Iran kommer att göra allt för att försvåra landens integritet och intressen men en invasion av Afghanistans ingång, inte i våra planer, sa han till "Teheran Times", en tidning som gjort sig känd som språkrör för den hårdaljnings män.

Det innehåller dock inte alls att konflikthöjt har blåst över.

Planer på attack

Iran tror fortfarande planera attacker med stridsplan mot Afghanistans harske tillbörjan med stridsplan mot Shindand flygfältet och har redan klagt att de 70 000 man som finns utmed gränsen kommer att stanna kvar där.

Dessutom medger iranerna att drygt 22 000 afghaniska mullaheders som levit i exil i landet nu har mobiliseras och befinner sig vid

militär intervention i Afghanistan.

USA anklagades för att ha organiserat och beväpnat talibana och för att inte ha gjort rösten när de för en månad sedan förstörde hela en talmulna med förlöjning, en samband med förlöjningen av staden Mazari-Sharif, massakrera tusentals shia-muslimer som stört den tidigare regimen.

En tredje faktor är skillnaden i tolkningarna av islam. Det för västminde om shia kontra sunna, än om att Teheran står för en radikal och massmobiliseraende variant av islam medan talibana är fundamentalister i ordet ritterhärskare. Nyligen kritiseras Iran i FN talibana för deras kriminos. Detta kan tyckas överraska för att konorra från en regim som i väst fått sitt som symbol för islam kynna förtryck, men då glömmar man bort att konor i Iran har förturit, rätt att båra vapen och att köra bil.

Ayatolla Khomeini uttalade från januari 1989 om att revolutionens logik har fört till tillämpningen av sharia-rätten för talibana ett härligt yrtrande. Den pågående konflikten mellan Teheran och Kabul påminner om att även den muslimska världen, trots alla utsäg om mottatsen, styrts av det strategiska spelets egna regler.

Stad i Afghanistan har Teheran genom sitt stöd till den regim som i tidigare belärska kriget kunnat sträcka sitt inflytande långt in mot Centralasien. Något som inte setts sedan Konflikten mellan mullorna i Iran och talibana. Afghanistan har flera dimensioner. En viktig faktor är Irans geopolitiska intressen i området. Under inbördeskrigets

slut i Afghanistan har Teheran genom sitt stöd till den regim som i tidigare belärska kriget kunnat sträcka sitt inflytande långt in mot Centralasien. Något som inte setts sedan Konflikten mellan mullorna i Iran och talibana. Iran har framstått som lastes upp i statliga Radio Teheran.

Ärvittdades

De i östra Irans diplomaternas och en journalists avrättades enligt en häxprocess i Iran. Mazari den 9 aug och deras lik kastades ut på gatan där de låg kvar i två dygn.

Talibana har varken hjälpt till att förhindra den urgamla Silkesvägen.

Kritiserar USA:s uppmaning

Genom vapenslamet hoppas Iran uppenbart att binda upp betydande delar av talibana och dess styrkor och på så sätt ge den besegrade nordalliansen en chans att komma tillbaka i norra och östra Afghanistan som de förstora för lära för en mäns sen.

På sönndagen ritade Iran hård kritik mot USA:s uppmaning till grannländerna att avstå från varje form av

Muslimsk fiendskap

7/9 - 9/8

För den handelse att den amerikanske statssekreteraren Samuel Huntingdon ses som civilisatorernas kamp för att förhindra en nära anslagande tillbörjan av en mänsklig krig mot talibana är fun- damentalister i ordet ritterhärskare. Nyligen kritiseras Iran i FN talibana för deras kriminos. Detta kan tyckas överraska för att konorra från en regim som i väst fått sitt som symbol för islam kynna förtryck, men då glömmar man bort att konor i Iran har förturit, rätt att båra vapen och att köra bil.

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Bo Gunnarsson

Text

"Låra sig en läkare"

Vår regering vill lära talibana en läkare och en del kretsar vill också återstående iska.

Iranska diplomater funna mördade

DN

11/9 - 98

AFGHANISTAN. Den styrande talibamilisen i Afghanistan har hittat nio saknade iranska diplomater. En talesman för talibanerna sade att diplomaterna hade mördats av talibansoldater som inte handlat på order. De mördade diplomaterna hittades i utkanten av staden Mazar-i-Sharif där de också försvann.

– Soldaterna hade ingen order från någon högre officer att döda dem, sade talesmannen till nyhetsbyrån AIP, som från Pakistan förmedlar nyheter sedda ur talibansperspektiv.

Iran har anklagat talibanerna för att hålla allt som allt elva iranska diplomater och en journalist fängna.

Irans utrikesminister Kamal Kharrazi sade i tisdags att Iran kommer att utnyttja alla möjligheter att befria iraner som hålls fängna i Afghanistan. Han uppmanade de styrande talibanerna att frige iranska fänglar "innan det är för sent", rapporterade nyhetsbyrån Irna.

TT-Reuters

Talibanstyrkor inledder en stor offensiv i centrala Afghanistan på torsdagen. Under natten erövrade de två samhällen i provinsen Bamiyan, uppgav den protalibanska nyhetsbyrån AIP i Pakistan. Talibanerna står nu bara drygt två mil från provinsen Bamiyans största stad Bamiyan som kontrolleras av shiamuslimska Hezb-i-Wahdat-rörelsen. TT-AFP

SVD 11/9 - 98

President hotar hämnas diplomatmord

IRAN. Irans förra president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani hotade på fredagen att hämnas de diplomater som dödats av talibanerna i Afghanistan. Men han betonade att Iran skulle välja tidpunkt och inte låta sig provoceras.

– Vi kommer att agera, sa Rafsanjani i samband med fredagsbön i Teheran. Talet direktsändes i iransk radio.

Det var i torsdags som talibanerna erkände att soldater "på eget beväg" hade dödat nio av de elva iranska diplomaterna. Det skedde i samband med erövringen av staden Mazar-i-Sharif i norra Afghanistan för en månad sedan. Enligt iranska källor lyckades två av diplomaterna fly, men den uppgiften förnekades igår av talibanerna. Alla elva är döda, hette det enligt nyhetsbyrån Afghan Islamic Press.

Några timmar efter talibanernas erkännande fördoms dådet av FN:s säkerhetsråd, som dessutom kräver en utredning så att de skyldiga kan ställas till svars. Spänningen är fortfarande hög längs gränsen, där Iran dragit samman 70 000 soldater. Enligt obekräftade uppgifter i Pakistan har iranska plan landat i den afghanska staden Bamiyan, där shiamuslimska oppositionsstyrkor förbereder sitt försvar mot framryckande talibanstyrkor. Iran fruktar en upprepning av händelserna i Mazar-i-Sharif där tusentals civila dödades när talibanerna erövrade staden. DN Lars Boström

Iranska diplomater måste fly

Teheran/Islamabad: Två iranska diplomater som greps av talibansk milis på ett konsulat i norra Afghanistan i augusti lyckades fly och undslapp därmed döden, tillkännagav utrikesdepartementet i Teheran på fredagen. Beskedet gavs av Irans vice utrikesminister Mohsen Aminzadeh.

– De kunde fly genom att gripa ett tillfälle, sade han till den officiella nyhetsbyrån Irna.

– En av dem som skadats vid det talibanska angreppet mot befolkningen kunde fly från Mazar-i-Sharif med hjälp av en vän.

Iran har tidigare rapporterat tio diplomater och en journalist som saknade efter attacken men har också hänvisat till alla elva som diplomater.

I torsdags meddelade den afghanska regimen att nio iranska diplomater hade mördats av talibansoldater som inte handlat på order. FN:s säkerhetsråd fördömde diplomatmorden i Afghanistan och krävde omedelbar utredning. Rådet uttrykte oro över den ökade spänningen i regionen och underströk att krisen i Afghanistan måste lösas fredligt. TT-AFP

Iran sänder 200 000 soldater till gränsen

SvD 14/9 - 98

Kabul: Talibanerna intog på söndagen Bamiyan, den sista storastadensom motståndsläggningen hållit i Afghanistan. Den officiella iranska nyhetsbyrån Irna bekräftade också att talibansoldater intagit staden.

Irans överbefälhavare tillkännagav samtidigt att ytterligare 200 000 soldater har skickats till gränsen efter mordet på nio iranska diplomater i Afghanistan. Därmed skulle 270 000 iranier snart stå redo vid gränsen.

I Teheran sade utrikesminister Kamal Kharrazi att det nationella säkerhetsrådet har fattat "ett mycket viktigt beslut" angående Afghanistan". Men han ville inte avslöja vad beslutet gärna ut på

Enligt talibankällor intogs staden Bamiyan vid tiotiden på söndagsmorgonen. Mängder av talibansoldater befriades.

En talesman för talibanerna anklagade de shiamuslimska styrkorna i rörelsen Hezb-i-Wahdat för att ha mördat fängslade talibanska soldater innan de flydde från Bamiyan.

Staden har en shiamuslimsk befolkning på 10 000 personer. Oro för att de sunnimuslimska talibanerna ska hämnas med massakrer har framförts av Iran. tt-reuters

Talibuner intog sista motståndsfästet

AFGHANISTAN. Talibanerna intog på söndagen Bamiyan, den sista stora staden som motståndsläggningen hållit i Afghanistan. Den officiella iranska nyhetsbyrån Irna bekräftade också att talibansoldater intagit staden.

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Talibaner oroar även Iran

DN 10/9-98

Ska ännu en konflikt få urarta framför ögonen på ett maktlöst statssamfund?

Mellanstatliga krig hör egentligen till historien. Visst finns ett fätal exempel – sammantötningarna nyligen mellan Indien och Pakistan är ett – men i huvudsak står Iraks invasion av Kuwait där som det stora undantaget.

Ska Afghanistan och Iran bli nästa? Risken bör inte underskattas. Teheran stöder den tidigare presidenten Burhanuddin Rabba ni och anklagar talibanerna för att ha kidnappat iranska diplomater.

En anseelig mobilisering har

skett vid gränsen; det talas om att cirka 70 000 iranier står stridsberedda. För tillfället råder visst lugn, men gnistan kan tändas när som helst.

Tanken förfälar. Afghanistan tillhör sedan en tid världens verkliga oroshärdar och finns högt på säkerhetsrådets dagordning. Talibanernas framfart har satt de mänskliga rättigheterna på undantag – inte minst kvinnorna, vars "ärbarhet" ska förvaras, dräbbas här. Amnesty International rapporterar om am-

putationer, tortyr, dödstraff och gryende av olitisktänkande. De militära framgångarna är betydande. Talibanerna kontrollerar för närvarande 85 procent av landet.

I Ryssland och de tidigare sovjettrepublikerna Tadzjikistan, Uzbekistan och Turkmenistan ses utvecklingen med oro. Risken för spridning av militant islamism är påtaglig i det instabila området. I Washington, som minst sagt har ansträngda relationer både till Teheran och Kabul, råds man att

en väpnad konflikt kan destabilisera hela regionen.

Det är lätt att vara efterklok och konstatera att ännu en krutdurk tycks våra på väg att fyllas framför ögonen på ett maktlöst statssamfund, att den preventiva diplomatin åter står på svärjighet, kuhkskap och varningssignaler har inte sakkats.

Men vad ska ha gjorts? Finns det rimliga ickenätlunda sätt att hanteringen av regimets brutal tillkasta sätts tillbaka till medeltiden? Svaret är brådskar.

Arbetet Nyheter/Söndag 13 september 1998

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Chefredaktör: Bo Bernhardsson • Postadress: Box 125, 201 21 Malmö • Besöksadress: Bergsgatan 20 • Telefon: 040/20 50 00 (vad) • Telefax 040/23 16 77 • Kan även läsas på ANs internetsida – <http://www.arbetet.se>

an
Ledare
SÖNDAG

Från förtryck till folkmord

FN måste ingripa för att stoppa talibanernas heliga krig

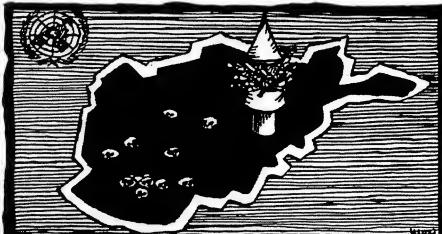
UTEVEKLINGEN I AFGHANISTAN går från ett visart förtäck av en urban befolkning symboliseras av en grotesk "beskyddarmerit" av framförallt Kabuls flickor och kvinnor mot en blodig etnisk utrensning i centrala och norra delarna av landet och med stor risk för en explosiv regional konflikt.

Talibanernas senkonna erkännande att liken av nio av de tio försvunna iranska diplomaterna påträffats i gravar i rebellernas Shairi i norr bekräftar uppgifterna om att massaker och etnisk utrensning som är serbernas övergrepp mot kosovo-albanerna i somras är förblekna.

I mer än ett avseende borde världen i dag återigen tänka tillbaka på det folkmord som Pol Pots röda khmerer under mer än tre år tillåtts att genomföra i Kambodja.

Det finns paralleller och FN, som i torsdags fördömd morden på de nio diplomaterna, måste nu omedelbart ta upp frågan även om det innebär inblandning i en suverän nations inre angelägenheter.

Det brådskar verkligen: nyhetsrapporter talar om att talibanerna inlett en offensiv i Bamyan-provinsen i Hindu-kusch-bergen vars befolkning domineras av shia-muslimska hazara-folket som slaktades i tusentals efter intåg i Mazar. Samtidigt hotar Iran med militär vedergrällning.



TYVÄR FÖREFALLER världen mer oroad över det öde som väntar de gigantiska 2 000 års gamla Buddha-skulpturerna i Bamyan-dalen som talibanerna förödött som "oislamska" än av 100 000-tals hazzars liv.

Medan Pol Pot talade om årnoll i Kambodja så hotar talibanerna att förinta 5 000 år av civilisation för att åstadkomma ett islamskt Utopia enligt, som man säger, profeten Muhammads egna ord.

Men det är en islamsk ideologi som per-

verterats av koranskolornas ofta analfabetiska mullor och i de enorma flyktinglä-

grens svärfattbara misär och hopplöshet.

Talibanernas har likt de röda khmererna

en sitt sociala ursprung bland landsbyg-

dens fattigaste, en klass som alltid levit i封建 förtäck och utsugning.

Att sända en eller två av sönerna till körskola har för många afghanske småbönder och lantbrutare blivit ett sätt att överleva. Kunskapsinhäntandet har inskränkts till rabblande av verser ur koranen och en indoktrinering jämförbar med hjärnvärt har närt hat mot den urbana eliten.

Befolkningen i Kabul och i norr har stämprats som oislamska kolaboratörer eller "gudlösa".

Drivkraften bakom folkmordet i Kambodja var politisk median talibanernas "reiningsbåd" motiveras av religiös fanatism och även racism.

PRECIS SOM VIETNAM genom sin invasion gjorde slut på Pol Pots tyranrikt i Iran nu med hävning från FN-stadgen att sända trupper över gränsen för att lära talibanerna en läxa. Flygleveransen av vapen till shia-milisen i Bamyan är ett första stege som kan följas av en militär insats eftersom Iran ser sig som en garanti för världens suveräniteter. 70 000 soldater ligger i beredskap längs gränsen.

Men liksom den amerikanska bombardéren mot terroristbaserna i Afghanistan förvärrede läget och lockade tusentals pakistanska ungdomar att delta i det heliga kriget och stärkte terrorernas beslutsamhet så kommer en militär iransk aktion att bli till en bumerang.

"Enandet" av landet sker till ett fruktansvärt pris och garanterar ofred.

Den nya utvecklingen ger konflikten helt nya och skräckmande dimensioner. Talibanernas ledarskap är splitterat och hålls samman av konflikten och den ev terroriststämpel som Washington nu överväger. Internationell isolering spelar extremisterna i händerna och kan skapa problem vi aldrig tidigare upplevt.

FN måste givevis snarast ingripa. Som ordförande i säkerhetsrådet måste Sverige driva saken. I avsaknad av ett resultatfullt politiskt agerande är den humanitära insatsen i landet västvärldens sista upstop och hopp. Vi kan bara inte vända den oskyldiga och värvlösa befolkningen ryggen.

Talibanerna tog Bamiyan – Iran har "fattat viktigt beslut om Afghanistan" Arb elet Nogheterna 16/9-98

KABUL/TT-REUTERS

● Talibanerna intog på söndagen Bamiyan, den sista stora staden som motståndslansansen hållit i Afghanistan. Den officiella iranska nyhetsbyrån Irna bekräftade också att talibansoldater intagit staden.

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"Viktigt beslut"

Irans överbefälhavare tillkännagav att ytterligare 200.000 soldater har skickats till gränsen efter mordet på nio iranska diplomater i Afghanistan. Därmed skulle 270.000 iranier snart stå redo vid gränsen.

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Shiamuslimerna i Bamiyan har fått stöd av Iran. Talibanerna anklagade på söndagen Iran för att blanda sig i Afghanistans inre angelägenheter.

Talibaneerna kontrollerar nu omkring 90 procent av Afghanistan. Talibanedaren Mohammed Omar har via den afganska nyhetsbyrån AIP i Pakistan fördomt dem som mördade nio iranska diplomater och sagt att de ska bestraffas.

Iran trappar upp ordkrig

Högsta beredskap. "Situationen i Afghanistan är mycket allvarlig".

16/9-98

Av Lars Boström
DN:s korrespondent

Iran trappade på tisdagen upp ordkriget mot de afganska talibaneerna. Landets andlige ledare och militära befälhavare ayatolla Ali Khamenei beordrade armén att inta högsta beredskap samtidigt som ledare för revolutionsgardet och den frivilliga Basijmilisen förklarade sig redo att "hjälpa Afganistans förtryckta folk".

Khamenei betonade att de väpnade styrkorna måste vara beredda att genomföra ledningens beslut och han beskrev situationen i Afghanistan som mycket allvarlig.

Bara timmar tidigare hade känsloladdade scener utsperats på Teherans flygplats när sju av de nio dödade iranska diplomaternas kroppar återfördes till hemlandet. Diplomaterna dödades nära talibanska styrkor den 8 augusti erövrade staden Mazar-i-Sharif i norra Afghanistan. Enligt iransk TV lämnades två av kropparna kvar

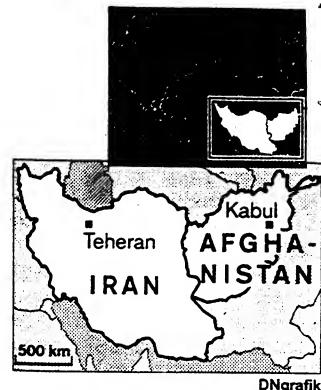
eftersom de var förstörda till oigenkänlighet.

– Jag försäkrar att vi kommer att försvara den islamiska republiken Irans ära och integritet efter bästa förmåga, sa landets president Mohammad Khatami till de tuents sörjande som samlats vid flygplatsen.

Längs gränsen fortsatte den iranska uppladdningen och en kvarts miljon man påstår vara på plats, eller på väg till området.

Möjligenska den hotfulla tonen i Teheran ses mot bakgrund av att FN:s säkerhetsråd senare på dagen väntades debattera den iransk-afghanska konflikten. Iran har efterlyst ett ökat internationellt engagemang och det är inte uteslutet att ledningen i Teheran vill påverka rådet genom att höja temperaturer i konflikten.

En intressant detalj i Khameneis uttalande på tisdagen var att han kopplade konflikten med talibaneerna till amerikanska intressen i regionen.



– USA och vissa av Afghanistans grannar har i ett försök att bygga en oljeledning och trygga sina egna intressen lätit denna okunniga stam (talibaneerna) gå los på det afganska folket, sa Khamenei enligt TT-AFP.

Kanske syftade han på de förhandlingar om en rörledning för centralasiatisk gas via Afghanistan till Pakistan som det amerikanska företaget Unocal påstår föra med talibaneerna. Iran har egna intressen när det gäller gas- och oljetransporter och ser nogärna att Afghanistan-Pakistan tar hand om en del av den lukrativa hanteringen.

Talibaneerna hotade senare på tisdagen att slå till mot iranska städer om Iran angriper Afghanistan.

– Iran ska veta att om Afghanistans jord angrips kommer vi att göra iranska städer till våra mål och hela ansvaret för det kommer att vila på Iran, sade talibaneernas talesman Wakil Ahmed till en afgansk tidning.

Khamenei varnar talibamilisen

15/9-98

IRAN. Irans armé meddelade på måndagen att den är fullt redo att utföra "varje tänkbar order" från landets högsta ledare. Utalandet kom sedan de iranska ledarna utfärdat en allvarlig varning till den styrande talibamilisen i Afghanistan och till Pakistan.

– Den islamiska republiken Irans armé, förlitande sig på Allah, är i full beredskap för att följa ledarnas order och utföra alla tänkbara uppdrag var som helst, hette det i ett arméuttalande i Teheran.

Uttalandet kom efter att ayatolla Ali Khamenei, Irans högste religiöse ledare och överbefälhavare, i radio hade varnat talibaneerna för att deras agerande kan leda till en regional storkonflikt.

– Jag har, hittills, lyckats undvika att tända en svårsläkt eld i regionen, sade ayatolla Khamenei. Men alla skall veta att en mycket stor fara föreligger.

Khamenei anklagade också Pakistan för att militärt intervenera i den afganska konflikten.

– Om inte detta upphör kan det leda till en katastrof, varnade Khamenei.

Den talibanska milisen intog i söndags staden Bamiyan, den proiranska oppositionens sista fäste.

Irans överbefälhavare tillkännagav att ytterligare 200 000 soldater har skickats till gränsen efter mordet på nio iranska diplomater i Afghanistan. Därmed skulle 270 000 iranier snart stå redo vid gränsen.

Talibaneerna kontrollerar nu omkring 90 procent av Afghanistan.

TT-Reuters

16/9 - 98

Irans armé redo ingripa vid gränsen

Spanningen mellan

Iran och talibanerna

ytterligare när Irans

krigsmakt sattes i

högsta beredskap.

Men en stor

invasion är inte

trolig, åtser

bedömare. Ett krig

skulle leda till en

regional kris.

Geneve, SVD

► Militären i Iran beordrades

ihögsta beredskappå tisdagen

villet ytterligare ökade spän-

nningen vid gränsen till tali-

bankontrollerade

Afghanis-

stan. Men risken för att Iran

verkliggen attackerar Afghanistan

som följd bedöms som mindre

trolig, menar schweiziske

Centralasienexperten Alain

Viaro.

Risk för nytt Vietnam

Situationen är inte så svart

och vit. Det handlar inte nöd-

vändgivs om total fred eller

fullt krig. Iran skickar troligen

egna trupper att invadera

Afghanistan. Riskerna för ett

okontrollerat regionalt krig

med inblandning från Pakis-

tan, Ryssland och central-

Högsta beredskap vid Iransk-afghanska gränsen

IRAN

Statsskick: Islamisk republik



✓

Huvudstad: Teheran

Invåningsantal: 60,8 milj (uppskattning 1993)

Folkgrupper: perser ca 50 proc, azerbajdzjaner

ca 20 proc, kurder ca 10 proc, bauchcher, turkmenar, araber.

Religion: shiamuslimer (statsreligion) 91 proc,

sunnumuslimer 8 proc, kristna, judar, zoroastrer

Cirka 2 miljoner afghanska

flyktingar finns i Iran.

Ryssland, Uzbekistan och

Tadzhikistan stöder Iran.

Militära styrkor

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Skiljelinjer inom islam

Islam har två huvudriktningar

– sunni och shia. Skillnaderna går tillbaka till arvstriderna efter

Muhammed på 600-talet. Ali, kusin till profeten

undan i successionsen och nära han senare blev kalif

var positionen omstridd. Ali mördades under striden.

Sunnumuslimer accepterar de kalifer som kom

efter Muhammed, inklusive Ali.

Shiamuslimer framhåller Ali och hans familj speciellt. Shia domineras i Iran där prästerskapet efter

shahens fall har skapat en islamsk stat med koranen

som högsta lag. Även **Turkiets aleviter**, som mot

sätter sig islamisering, sätter Ali högt. De förkastar

dock mycket i den muslimska traditionen och aleviternas fall har skapat en blandreligion. Mest

långtgående är **alawiterna i Syrien**, en sekt som

president Hafez Assad tillhör och vilken dominarar

den syriska maktapparaten. Alawiterna hyllar Alison gud. SVD

Grafik: BIRG. HAGLUND, O. REHNBERG

der in dem på militära räder att lika hotfullt med att "om vi attackeras slår vi tillbaka mot iranska ständer".

Enligt Iran står 270000 stridsberedda soldater vid gränsen till Afghanistan. Det är mer än hälften av Irans totala armé. Men Irans vilja att visa muskelsytta förstärktes dock talbanledaren Moham-

Något oväntat efterlyste dock talbanledaren Moham-

med Omar på tisdagen en FN-meddeling i konflikten. Det kan tyda på en möjlig förhandlingslösning mellan det shia-

muslisma Iran och den sunnitiska talbanmilisen.

Viktiga naturresurser och dess framida transportvägar. Iranierna oroar sig å sin sida för att talbanerna skall ta kontrollen över den lönsamma

heroinsmugglingen från Afghanistan via Iran till Europa, säger Viaro.

– Men detta är främst en ekonomisk konflikt, där religiösen används som ursäkt för

GUNILLA VON HALL

Tusentals civila får hjälp av FN

SVD 18/9 -98

KABUL, TT-AFP

► I skuggan av det allt större krigshotet mellan Afghanistan och Iran förbereder FN en jätteinsats för att hjälpa de 10 000-tals civila som hamnat i kläm mellan angripande talibanskrytor och olika milisgrupper i den svårtångliga Hazarajatregionen i centrala Afghanistan.

I övrigt är det här området varit avskuret från omvärlden. FN har gått på gång väjdatt till den talibanska ledningen om att få använda de avspärrade vägarna i området för mat och förnödenheter, men har ständigt stoppat från att utföra några hjälpinsatser.

Hjälpen har dragits in

Efter sommaren mord på tre FN-anställda har FN också dragit ned personalen i landet till ett absolut minimum och i praktiken upphört med hjälpinväksamheten.

Inne förräna staden Bamyan föll i talibansernas händer för ett par dagar sedan lyckades förhandlingarna. Vid ett möte i FN-höghökeriet i New York i onsdags väждade de talibanska förhandlarna om att FN och andra hjälpsorganisationer skyndsamt skickar hjälp för att undvika en "potentiell katastrof".

Talibanaerna har också lovat att garantera de utsända hjälparbaternas säkerhet i området och ge dem möjlighet att nå fram dit de vill. Tidigare har talibanaerna vid olika tillfällen hindrat hjälp att nå fram till områden som hållits av flentliga styrkor.

Områdets trånga bergspass är mycket besvärligt att passera, varför FN kommer att vara beroende av den flygplats som finns utanför Bamyan. Men den är för närvarande svårt skadad efter strider mellan rivaliseraende milisgrupper.

FN lämnade Afghanistan 20 augusti sedan en italiensk FN-officer mördats efter det amerikanska angreppet på den påstådda terroristbasen i östra Afghanistan. I juli fick två lokalställda FN-tjänstemän struparna avskurna framför FN-kontoret i Jalalabad.

Krigshotet trappas upp

Iran utsysser högsta beredskap i konflikten med Afghanistan



Iraner med bilder av nio mördade diplomater hade mött upp när kistorna med de nio anlända till huvudstaden Teheran i mängd.

Arbetet 16/9 -98

● Krigshotet i Afghanistan trappades på tisdagen upp på ett dramatiskt sätt då siatolat Khamenei, Irans militär- och överhuvudkare och religiöse ledare, utlyste högsta beredskap och beordrade att man av "stöder och försvar" utföra de order som kommer.

Talibanaerna var snabba i repliken och gav besked om att man i händelse av ett angrepp kommer att attackera iranska städer.

Khamenei uppgav vid ett möte i Irans parlament att för revolutionärer gärdet att hävda förhindrat krigets flammer från att blossa upp men att risken för en konflikt nu är mycket stor.

—Vi har en skyldighet att varna om islams heliga namn och hjälpa det förtryckta afghaniska folket, sa han enligt iranska nyhetsbyråen Irna.

Hatet mot de afghanska talibanaerna växer över hela landet och tusentals grådande demonstranter ropade död åt fienden

då kistorna med nio mördade diplomater natten till måndagen anlände till huvudstaden. Statsbegravningen på fredag vintas samsöna en miljon sörjande.

Mer än 10 000 soldater är på väg mot området i östra Iran där 70 000 soldater nedgrävda i skyttevärn. Det är hälften av hela arméns och frivilliga revolutionsgardister uppegs också beredda att åka österut.

Oron växer i Pakistan

Oron växer i Pakistan som kan ha in i den konflikten eftersom de drygt 5 000 påverkade frivilliga av religiös skäl gärt med talibanaerna i deras heliga krig. Iran har uppdraget gängar anslagat Islambad för att ge talibanaerna militär och ekonomisk hjälp och uppmanat dem att ta bort sina klor.

Arméchefen Karamat varnar på tisdagen nationen för krigsrisken och för möjligheten av ett blodbad i den sekterska

konflikten mellan landets sunnit och shiamuslimer som på senare är krävt 100-tals dödsoffer.

Talibanaernas andlige ledare, mullah Omar, uppmuntrade från sitt lämna i Kandahar Iran att komma och mata in de förhandlare under FN:s lagar.

—Vi utsöker inte krig mot Iran förvarrar oss med alla neutraliteten, sa han.

Iran har hittills avisat samtalt eftersom man anser att talibanaerna är så primitiva och uppifylla av självförhållande än att de kan strida i internationella avtal om vapenförbudet. Läget är förfärrats sedan anslaget i Kabul där sönödiga erövrade staden. Bamyan som var de afghanska shia-muslimeras sista fastning.

Oron för att de fanatiska talibanaerna skulle massakrera tusentals shias på samma sätt som skedde i Mazar-i-Sharif i norr i början av augusti ökar också. Iran väждade på tisdagen till FN att förhindra en ny tragedi i ett långt utdragnat gerillakrig är en annan faktor.

Pakistan är isolerat och saknar helt vänner i Centralasien.



Bo Gunnarsson

Utan en godtagbar förklaring till morden och att de ansväriga ställs inför rätta, vägar FN att formellt återvända till Afghanistan i full skala.

Hård svensk kritik

Sveriges utrikesminister Lena Hjelm-Wallén riktaade i går hårdare angrepp mot Afghanistan, som lämnats av bland annat Amnesty.

Hjelm-Wallén uttalade stor oro över rapporterna om massakrer på shiamuslimer i Afghanistan, som lämnats av bland annat Amnesty.

Sverige arbetar som ordförande i FN:s säkerhetsråd på att snabbt få utrett vad som hänt, skriver utrikesministern i ett skriftligt uttalande.

Afghanistan frigav iranier

Islamahadit-Trötta och medtagna kom på fördagen hem från Iran som frigivits av talibanaerna från Afghanistan till Pakistan. De hade hållits fängla på islamistmilisen bas i Kandahar i nära en månad.

Vad som ska hänta med de 40 iranier som finns kvar i fängelserna beror på vad Iran gör härnäst, klargjorde en talesman från Afghaniстанs ambassad i Irans huvudstad Islamabad.

Vad Afghanistan hoppas på efter sin godwilligst är att Iran ska tillbaka i stor trappsteg till samhället vid gränsen mellan de två länderna.

TT-AP/9 -98

Raketanfall skördade många offer i Kabul

Kabul: Minst 180 personer dödades eller skadades i Afghanistan huvudstad Kabul på söndagen, en talesman för FN:s säkerhetsråd sade vid en presskonferens från oppositionens huvudkvarter i den östra delen av staden.

Oppositionen sade att tre raketar slog ner under kort tid. Den första i närrheten av flygplatsen anställdes inga större skador. Den andra träffade en förröt till Kabul och dödade minst elva personer. Ytterligare 30 skadades. Den tredje raketan slog ner på en trängsel fyld marknadsplats strax väster om Kabul och orsakade stor förödelse. Brända och förvirrade människor körde lång över huvudet och ögonen.

De regerande talibanska milis-beväpnade elden mot ställningar norr om staden, där oppositionsledaren Ahmed Shah Massoud styrkor fanns. TT-REUTERS SVD 21/9 -98

BERGENS TIDENDE - TORSdag 16. JULI 1998

Krise for Afghanistanhjelsen

KABUL: Bistandsarbeidet til Afghanistan kan bryte sammen, på grunn av Talibans nya krav til hjelpeorganisasjonene i landet. Taliban har gitt hjelpeorganisasjonene ultimatum om å flytte til en utbommet ruin uten vann, strøm og vinduer i utkanten av byen innen søndag, eller å bli utvist fra landet. Flyttekravet kommer på toppen av en rekke andre konflikter mellom hjelpeorganisasjonene og den fundamentalistiske Taliban-militsen, blant annet om svinners adgang til helsetjenester.

LØRDAG 18. JULI 1998 **VG**

Trekker seg ut av Kabul

Mens hundretusener afganere sårt trenger hjelp utenfra, vurderer internasjonale hjelpeorganisasjoner å trekke seg ut av landet – i protest mot Taliban-regimets innblanding i deres affærer.

Denne uken gjorde Taliban, som kontrollerer tre firedele av Afghanistan, det klart at de ikke vil fravike kravet om at alle hjelpeorganisasjonene som befinner seg i Kabul må flytte inn i ruinene av den gamle polytekniske skolen i byen.

Det ble presistert at hvis de nekter å

etterkomme kravet, må de forlate landet – og ikke bare Kabul by, slik det opprinnelige kravet la.

Ingen frist

Det er imidlertid ikke satt noen frist for en eventuell tilbaketrekkning.

– Vi håper hjelpeorganisasjonene

kan stå samlet i denne konflikten. Vår erfaring er at situasjonen i Afghanistan endrer seg raskt, og at en eventuell tilbaketrekkning bare vil være midlertidig. Vi ønsker derfor å opprettholde dialogen med Taliban, sier leder av Afghanistanstkomiteen i Norge, Per Hornfelt.

BERGENS TIDENDE - LØRDAG 18. JULI 1998

Må forlate Afghanistan

OSLO: Både Afghanistanstkomiteen i Norge og Kirkens Nødhjelp kommer trøig til å forlate Afghanistans hovedstad Kabul. Taliban-regimet har stilt uakseptable krav til organisasjonene. Det ytterliggående regimet har krevd at alle de utenlandske hjelpeorganisasjonene skal flytte fra sine nåværende tilholdssteder i Kabul og samles i ruinene av byens gamle polytekniske skole. Der er det verken tak, lys, vann, strøm eller andre nødvendigheter. Taliban krever også å få personopplysninger om afganere som arbeider for organisasjonene.

To afganske FN-ansatte drept

To afganske FN-ansatte er blitt drept etter å ha blitt bortført i Jalalabad.

Genève Det var FNs høykommissær for flyktninger (UNHCR) som opplyste dette i går. Nyhetene om drapene kom samtidig som det ble klart at Taliban har utvist internasjonale hjelpeorganisasjoner fra Kabul.

Omstendighetene bak kidnappingene og drapene er ikke klart. 49 år gamle Mohammed Nazir Habib arbeidet for FNs høykommissær for flyktninget, mens 55 år gamle Mohammad Hashim Bahsaryar arbeidet for Verdens matvareprogram. Organisasjonen Leger uten Grenser mener FNs kompromissivt overfor det fundamentalistiske regimet er en av årsakene til at Taliban

– Vi legger skylden på FNs lavere profil for den situasjonen vi nå har havnet i. Helt fra Taliban kom til markten og frem til i dag har FN vist stor kompromissivt overfor Taliban-regimet, blant annet i kvinnesørsmål. I værøye har FN vært alt for svake, sier Peleman til NTB.

Asfemposen Tirsdag 21. juli 1998

Nordmenn flykter fra Taliban

leder Per Hornfelt ved Afghanistanstkomiteen i Norge.

JON TUFTO For farlig: Afghanistanstkomiteen i Norge frykter for sikkerheten til de ansatte, og trekker seg ut av den Taliban-kontrollerte hovedstaden Kabul. – Taliban krever at alle hjelpeorganisasjonene flytter inn i ruinene av en gammel skole. Det ville fått enorme konsekvenser, om bygget ble truffet av en raket, sier styre-

etnisk grunnlag er ikke uvanlig i Kabul, ifølge lederen for Afghanistanstkomiteen. – Vi blir nødt til å forlate et barnehjem hvor det bor 700 barn. Det er foreløpig ingen fare for liv og helse, men bygningen er i svært dårlig stand etter flere plundringar. Arbeidene ned i pusset opp bygget må opphøre, sier Hornfelt. **Massearrestasjoner** på

Krisen undertrykking

Dagbladet 980722
Norge gir 60 millioner kroner i humanitær bistand til Afghanistan. Kirkens Nødhjelp holder fremtides kontore sine åpne. Taliban ønsker å få kontroll over utenlandske hjelpearbeidere fordi de oppfattes som en trussel mot den steinharde kvinneundertrykkingen i landet.

Jenter over åtte år får ikke gå på skole, kvinner får ikke arbeide utenfor hjemmet og selv legebehandling er vanskelig tilgjengelig for kvinnelige pasienter. Taliban gikk ned fra 200 til 39.

LØRDAG 18. JULI 1998 **VG**

I dag er det krisenettet i Islamabad i Pakistan om Taliban-regimets brutale fjerning av utenlandske hjelpeorganisasjoner i Kabul. **AV ANNE THURMANN-NIELSEN** Der møter blant andre Norges ambassadør Alf Arne Ramslien og representanter for FN og de viktigste givende landene. FN's sikkhetsråd fordøpte i går kvald Taliban-behandling av hjelpeorganisasjonene. I løpet av få dager har antallet utenlandske hjelpearbeidere i Kabul gikk ned fra 200 til 39.

BERGENS TIDENDE - LØRDAG 18. JULI 1998

Asfemposen Tirsdag 23. juli 1998

JON TUFTO For farlig: Afghanistanstkomiteen i Norge frykter for sikkerheten til de ansatte, og trekker seg ut av den Taliban-kontrollerte hovedstaden Kabul. – Taliban krever at alle hjelpeorganisasjonene flytter inn i ruinene av en gammel skole. Det ville fått enorme konsekvenser, om bygget ble truffet av en raket, sier styre-

Taliban truer hjelpeorganisasjonene

Kabulkontoret til Kirkens Nödhjelp er fortsatt åpent – men venter besøk av Taliban-militsen.

GUNNAR FILSETH

– Vi venter besøk, men håper jo det ikke kommer noen. Kontorene til mange av de andre er nå stengt. Vi vet bare ikke når turen kommer til oss...

Dette sier Toril Borud, nestleder for Kirkens Nödhjelp i Afghanistan, på telefonen fra Peshawar i Pakistan. Sammen med lederen for Afghanistan-programmet, Jan Åhlander, dro hun fra Kabul sist søndag, som det ultra-ortodokse Taliban-regimet hadde satt som frist. Over radio holder de

kontakt med lokalansatte aghanere som driver Kabulkontoret videre – så lenge det varer.

Soldater og sikkerhetsfolk fra Taliban-militsen, med sine Kalashnikov'er over skulderen, fortsatte i går sine razziaer mot bistandskontorene. Minst 30 av de 38 internasjonale organisasjonene som har vært virksomme i Kabul, har nå fått kroken på døren. Blant disse er kontoret til Den norske Afghanistankomitéen.

På kollisjonskurs

Organisasjonene har de siste månedene vært på kollisjonskurs med Taliban, som har gitt dem valget mellom å flytte til et isolert og utbommet bygningskompleks i utsiden av byen, eller å komme seg ut av Afghanistan. Bare en av de 38 har godtatt

regimets diktat. Likevel har også denne fått stengningsordre.

Borud betegner de anvisete lokalene som helt håplose. Bygningene har hverken vann, strøm eller vindusruter. For et par år siden lå de midt i en slagmark, dermed mangler noen av bygningene også tak.

Øyne som ser

Flytteoperasjonen er bare et påskudd for å få organisasjonene ut, de har aldri vært populære hos Taliban, sier sosionomen fra Karasjok. Den islamisk-fundamentalistiske bevegelsen vil ha kontroll med alt som foregår og er særlig på vakt mot et liberalet kvinnesyn.

– Vi ser det som skjer, og sier fra om det. Når vi er ute, blir det færre øyne som ser...

– Men folk i Kabul vil gjer-

ne ha oss her. De synes det er forferdelig det som nå skjer. Mange som har det vanskelig nok fra før, vil få det enda vanskeligere. Mange blir vil måtte gå sultne etter dette.

30 000 krigsenker

Det skal være rundt 30 000 krigsenker i Kabul. Dertil kommer kvinner som er gift med krigsinvalider og mineofre. Med familiemedlemmer blir dette en stor skare som har vært avhengig av hjelpeorganisasjone for å overleve. For en stor del lever de av subsidiert brød fra organisasjonenes bakerier, som nå etter alt å dømme vil bli stengt.

Siden razziaene begynte sist søndag er en rekke lokalansatte aghanere blitt arrestert, uten at noen har fått vite grunnen.

– Det ser ikke ut til at de

går særlig systematisk til verks. De har tatt med seg kanskje en aghaner her og to der. Foreløpig vet ingen hva som vil skje med dem, forteller Borud.

Mandag ble to aghanske FN-ansatte funnet drept utenfor byen Jalalabad. Det er ikke opplyst noe om hva motivet for drapene kan være. Taliban har ellers stått på rimelig god fot med FN.FN-organisasjonene og Det internasjonale Røde Kors har fått lov til å fortsette bistanden – kanskje som de eneste.

EU-kommisjonens hjelpeorganisasjon er derimot blitt kastet ut. Taliban-soldater trengte seg mandag inn i lokalene, drev ut personale og bommet igjen bygningen.

EU finansierer prosjekten til flere av de private organisasjonene i Afghanistan.

BERGENS TIDENDE - ONSDAG 22. JULI 1998

Kritisk i Kabul

NINA HAABETH, NTB
Kabul/Oslo

Uoversiktig situasjon: Taliban-myndighetene viser ingen kompromissvilje overfor internasjonale hjelpeorganisasjoner i den aghanske hovedstaden Kabul. Lokalbefolkningsen går vanskeligere tider i møte. Tirsdag ble flere kontorer stengt samtidig som Taliban gikk til nye arrestasjoner av lokalt ansatte. Av en internasjonal stab av hjelpearbeidere på rundt 200 er nå bare 39 igjen i Kabul.

Kirkens Nödhjelp (KN) som har kontor i Kabul ventet tirsdag stadig besøk av Taliban.

– Vi er spente på hva som kommer til å skje. Situasjonen er svært uoversiktig, sier informasjonssjef i KN, Helge Kjøllesdal.

Kjøllesdal, som tirsdag morgen

var i kontakt med Kabul, sier at det ser ut til at Taliban går systematisk til verk.

– Det virker som om de kjenner organisasjonene meget godt, og at de vet hva de gjør. De går fra distrikt til distrikt og gjennomsøker og stenger kontorer. Gledelig nok fikk en av våre lokale samarbeidspartnere, som arbeider med helse, lov til å fortsette driften. Det kan bety at selv om de stenger kontoret vårt, kan vi fortsette en del av innsatsen gjennom våre lokale partnere, sier Kjøllesdal.

Ifølge nyhetsbyrået AFP har nærmere 20 internasjonale hjelpeorganisasjoner nå fått sine kontorer stengt. De fleste av de utviste organisasjonene er kjent for å være skarpe kritikere av Talibans politikk – ikke minst når det gjelder

kvinners rettigheter. FN, som av mange kritiseres for å være for kompromissvillige, og det nøytrale internasjonale Røde Kors ser foreløpig ut til å få bli.

Arsaken til at Taliban går til det dramatiske skrittet å arrestere lokale hjelpearbeidere, stenge kontorer og vise ut internasjonale representanter, er at de ønsker full kontroll.

De internasjonale hjelpeorganisasjonene har vært en torn i øyet på Taliban siden de kom til makten i Kabul høsten 1996. De internasjonale organisasjonene har klaget på de vanskelige arbeidsvilkårene for sine ansatte, og krevd skolegang og helsetilbud for Afghanistans kvinner. Men Taliban frabrer seg enhver innblanding i «indre anliggende» og har tatt kritikken svært illa opp.

Moskva støtter aktivt kampen mot Taliban

Ti år etter at sovjetiske styrker rullet ut av Afghanistan over Amu Darya-broen, er russerne tilbake igjen som aktører i den nye aghanske krigen. **Åtteposten** 9.8.07.28

Washington Denne gangen er russerne ute etter olje, dessuten forsøker de å beskytte Russlands grenser, skriver avisen The New York Times.

Moskva er i ferd med å bli en betydelig støttespiller for den såkalte nord-alliansen, som kjemper mot Taliban-militsen – de militante islamiske fundamentalistene som kontrollerer

det meste av landet inklusive Kabul.

Amerikanske embedsmenn tror det nye russiske engasjementet i Afghanistan er ledd i en omfattende strategi for å sikre russisk innflytelse i Sentral-Asia og regionens store oljeforekomster.

Russland sender ikke soldater denne gangen. 13 000 soldater døde der under Sovjetets ni år lange okkupasjon på 80-tallet. I stedet sørger russerne for tungt våpen, opplæring og logistikk til den løst allierte Taliban-opposisjonen med base i fjelltraktene i nord.

Med på laget er også Iran som ønsker å stanse Taliban-militsen før den vokser seg for

mektig. Det iranske presteregimet betrakter i tillegg Talibans sterkt dogmatiske for tolkning av Koranen som ekstrem.

Iran forsyner nord-alliansen med enda mer våpen, drivstoff og annet materiell enn russerne, hevder amerikanerne.

Utenfor dette selskapet på hver sin side av Iran befinner Saudi-Arabia og Pakistan seg, begge Talibans venner.

I et område der alliansene alltid har skiftet, der fiender kan bli partnere og venner havne i krig, støtter Russland nå opprørstyrker som kommanderes av ledere fra den tidligere mujahedin-geriljaen. Mujahedin og sovjetstyrkene

kjemper mot hverandre på 80-tallet, mujahedin med den amerikanske etterretningen CIA i ryggen.

De som mest av alt nyter godt av støtten fra Russland er gruppen som ledes av Ahmad Shah Massoud. Han var en av de mest aggressive og effektive aghanske figurene i CIAs hemmelige krig mot sovjetene, skriver The New York Times.

Massouds tidligere støtter i USA unngår ikke å se ironien.

– Massoud var spydspissen, mannen vi gikk til når vi ville ha noe gjort mot russerne, sier en etterretningssmann til avisen. (NTB)

Taliban utviser hjelpearbeidere

BERGENS TIDENDE · TIRSDAG 21. JULI 1998

FN får kritikk: Taliban-myndighetene utviste flere internasjonale hjelpearbeidere fra Afghanistans hovedstad Kabul mandag.

Leger uten grenser mener FNs kompromissvilje overfor det fundamentalistiske regimet er en av årsakene til at Taliban våger et slikt skritt.

I tillegg til å stenge flere av hjelpearbeidernes kontorer, samt kontoret til deres paraplyorganisasjon ACBAR, arresterte Taliban flere lokalt ansatte. Taliban gikk også til det skritt å lukke EU-kommisjonens kontor i Kabul. EU vil nå suspendere sin hjelpe til de områdene Taliban kontrollerer. EU skulle ha frigitt et lån til Afghanistan på 11 millioner dollar (nærmere 80 millioner kroner) 1. august.

Kirkens Nødhjelp frykter at organisasjonens kontor står for tur tirsdag eller onsdag.

FN-kritikk

Blant organisasjonene som nå er utvist er Leger uten grenser. Lederen for den norske avdelingen, Kurt Peleman, sier at organisasjonen er svært kritisk til FNs rolle i Afghanistan.

— Leger uten grenser legger skylden på FNs lave profil for den situasjonen vi nå har havnet i. Helt fra Taliban kom til makten og fram til i dag har FN vist stor kompromissvilje overfor Taliban-regimet, blant annet i kvinnespørsmål. I våre øyne har FN vært alt for svake, sier Peleman til NTB.

Leger uten grenser er likevel glad for at FN foreløpig ser ut til å kunne fortsette sitt arbeid i Kabul.

Leger uten grenser evakuerer tirsdag tre internasjonale medarbeidere som for tiden oppholder seg i Kabul. De evakueres ut av Kabul til Gazni-området, der de skal fortsette hjelpeinnsatsen.

— Men våre prosjekter i Kabul må foreløpig innstilles. Vi gir i dag støtte til fire klinikker og to

sykehus, som til sammen sysselsetter 20 lokalt ansatte. Blant disse er rundt halvparten kvinner. Vi frykter at det blir svært vanskelig for disse å fortsette sitt arbeid, sier Peleman.

— Svært alvorlig

Taliban stengte også kontoret til paraplyorganisasjonen ACBAR. Informasjonssjef Helge Kjellesdal i Kirkens Nødhjelp ser svært alvorlig på dette.

— Det var et strategisk valg, for uten ACBAR er det vanskelig for andre organisasjoner å operere, sier Kjellesdal.

— Dette betyr slutt for de frivillige utenlandske organisasjonene i Kabul. Trolig er det begynnelsen på slutt for utlendinger her i det hele tatt, sier Charles MacFadden i ACBAR til nyhetsbyrået AFP.

Ingen norske

Kjellesdal opplyser at Taliban ennå ikke har aksjonert mot Kirkens Nødhjelp i Kabul, men at de frykter at de kan slå til tirsdag

eller onsdag.

Pressetalskvinnne Hanne Marie Kaarstad i UD opplyser at ingen ansatte i norske organisasjoner skal være blant de arresterte. Styreleder Per Hornfelt i Afghanistan-komiteen har heller ikke fått meldinger som tyder på at norske organisasjoner ansatte er rammet.

— Men vi ser på denne utviklingen som meget bekymringsfull. Vi har lenge fulgt nøyde med i det som skjer i Afghanistan, og har visst at dette ikke er lett å arbeide der, men dette er en drastisk utvikling, sier Kaarstad.

— Vurderer Norge å kutte bistanden til Afghanistan, slik EU nå er nært ved å gjøre?

— Vi har foreløpig ikke tatt noen slik beslutning, men så er jo også denne siste utviklingen meget forsk. Vi følger som sagt med, og er i jevn kontakt med andre giverland, sier Kaarstad.

NTB
Kabul/Oslo

Dagbladet

Onsdag 22. juli 1998 23

I Afghanistan blomstrer et kjønnsdiskriminerende apartheidregime som ryster Vesten. Men bak står Vestens interesser.

Guds terror

Da jeg nylig tok drosje hjem, spilte sjåføren bare stille musikk i bilen. Han forklarte at han ikke orket å høre noe annet, fordi det var krig i hans hjemland. En krig mot hele folket, men særlig mot kvinnene, ja, mot fornuften selv.

Han kom fra Afghanistan, et land som til tross for den geografiske avstanden er nærliggende til at dets gro-



PETER NORMANN
WAAGE

SIDE 2

begrunnelsen er at staten trenger lokalene, men årsaken er snarere at de kunne smitte befolkningen med vestlig dekadens, som å anse kvinner for mennesker.

■ ■ ■ Taliban betyr teologisk.

hjem, spilte sjåføren bare stille musikk i bilen. Han forklarte at han ikke orket å høre noe annet, fordi det var krig i hans hjemland. En krig mot hele folket, men særlig mot kvinnene, ja, mot fornuften selv.

Han kom fra Afghanistan, et land som til tross for den geografiske avstanden er nærliggende til at dets gro-

teske terrorregime angår oss, og ikke bare gjennom den håndfull flyktninger som er i landet. Hjelpearbeidere som Kirkens Nødhjelp kommanderes ut av talibanstyret. Den offisielle begrunnelsen er at staten trenger lokalene, men årsaken er snarere at de kunne smitte befolkningen med vestlig dekadens, som å anse kvinner for mennesker.

■ ■ ■ Snart ble det klart at krigens fortsatte, nå mellom Gud, representert ved de nye maktaverne, og folket. Landet skulle få et islamisk styre, og etter et par måneder med taliban over makten, kom forordningene. Straffen for ikke å følge dem var i verste fall døden: Kassettspiller ble forbudt, avbildninger av dyr og mennesker likeså. Musikk, dans og drageflyging, som var en yndet sport i landet, ble avskaffet — fordi det tok oppmerksomheten bort fra Gud. Alle menn ble pålagt å bære et skjegg som var minst en nev langt, med den følge at den viktigste salgsartikkelen nå skal være ansiktshår. Guds farligste fiende er likevel kvinnen.

■ ■ ■ Departementet for å fremleske det gode og bekjempe det onde» erklærte få måneder etter maktovtakelsen at det iranske sløret *chador* skulle ertastes med *burka*, et hodelikende telt alle kvinner måtte iføre seg utendørs. Leger fikk forbud mot å behandle kvinner som ikke var i følge med en mannlig slekting, noe som særlig går ut over Kabuls 20 000 enker. Jenteskolene ble stengt. Ut dannelse og arbeid ble forbudt for kvinner.

■ ■ ■

■ ■ ■

■ ■ ■ Newsweek kan fortelle at talibans makt baserer seg på frykt, ikke forståelse. Under burkaen er kvinnene kledd som i Vesten; med fare for livet organiseres det hemmelige jenteskoler på alle nivåer. Modige leger trosser forbudene, og parabolantener, som selvfølgelig også er forbudt, gjemmes i vanntanker. For «de» er en taliban under hver stein», som et av de nye ordtakene i landet lyder.

■ ■ ■ Talibans viktigste støttespiller befinner seg likevel i landet. Pakistan var først ute med å anerkjenne regimet. Bak Pakistan står USA. Sovjets tilbaketrekning fra Afghanistan stanset ikke den kalde krigen i området. Den er blitt varm og handler om oljeledningene fra de tidligere sovjetrepublikkene. USA vil ikke at oljen skal ledes inn i Iran, og har forsøkt den iransk-fiendtlige talibans bevegelsen med våpen. Derfor angår Afghanistans kjønnsdiskriminerende apartheidregime også oss. Norges mektigste allierte har ofret landet på det stort politiske sjakkbratt og hindret en fredelig modernisering.

IRAK ANKLAGER FN FOR LUREI

BAGDAD: Iraks visestatsminister Tariq Aziz beskyldte i går FN's våpeninspektører for uregul spill og for å spre USA's arend. Aziz kritiserte lederen for våpeninspektorene, Richard Butler, for å la inspeksjonene trekke i landdrag. (NTB-Reuters)

AVLYSTE MILITÆRØVELSE ETTER RUSSISK PROTEST
VLADIVOSTOK: Amerikanske spesialstyrker avlyste i går en planlagt landgangsøvelse nær den russiske stillehavbyen Vladivostok etter protest fra lokale kommunister og nasjonalister. (NTB-Reuters)

VACLAV HAVEL OPERERT IGJEN

FRAHA: En sikret att han gjennomgikk en mageoperasjon, mattede Tsjekkias president Václav Havel i går gjennom nok et inngrep. Leger ved et sykehus i Praha skar et snitt i Havels hoftrør for å gjøre det lettere for ham å puste. (NTB-DPA)

~~Det er ikke Dagsavisen / Arbeiderbladet~~ 980804

Ny Taliban-offensiv

Hjelpearbeidere evakueres fra nordlige Afghanistan

Internasjonale hjelpearbeidere planla i går evakuering fra byen Mazar-e-Sharif nord i Afghanistan etter meldinger om at Taliban-styrker nærmest seg byen. Dersom Taliban-militisen erobrer Mazar-e-Sharif, vil den være nærmest sitt mål om full kontroll over hele Afghanistan.

■ ASNE GULLIKSTAD

Søndag tok Taliban-styrker kontroll over byen Sheberghan, som også ligger i området som har vært kontrollert av opposisjonen. Erobringen var et kraftig tilbake slag for opposisjonen, og Taliban nærmest seg nå Mazar-e-Sharif som er hovedkvarteret til opposisjonen. Og den eneste storbyen som fortsatt ikke kontrolleres av Taliban.

Det er blitt meldt om kamper mellom Taliban-styrker og opposisjonsstyrke bare 15 kilometer vest for Mazar-e-Sharif, og 11 utenlandske hjelpearbeidere fra ulike hjelpearbeidserorganisasjoner planla i går å dra fra området, melder nyhetsbyrået Reuters. Internasjonale Røde Kors-komiteen skulle sende et fly inn i området for å frakte hjelpearbeiderne ut.

HØRTES SKUDD

Imbgjengen i Mazar-e-Sharif fortalte i går at de kunne høre skudd vest for byen, men at det var stille i selve byen. I tillegg til offensiven fra vest har Taliban også angrepet de mål som ligger seg Mazar-e-Sharif fra nordøst, etter å ha tatt kontroll over den lille byen Hayraton på grensen mellom Afghanistan og Usbekistan.

Både sivile og soldater fra den etniske Hazara-minoriteten var i går på vei ut av Mazar-e-Sharif.

UROLIG

Mens internasjonale hjelpearbeidere tidligere i sommer er blitt kastet ut fra Taliban-kontrollerte områder, har de kunnnet fortsette i nord der opposisjonens styrer. I de Taliban-kontrollerte områdene har både FN og Røde Kors fått bli.

Men uroligheter har bare fort til. Det internasjonale Røde Kors, Krfors og Røde Kors-kontoret i fjor tilhørte forbundet har hatt permanent tilstedeværelse i Mazar-e-Sharif siden mars, opplyser utenlandske sjeff Magni Barth i Norges Røde Kors.

— Området har vært uralig på grunn av kamper mellom opposisjonen og Taliban, sier innen opposisjonen. Derfor flyttet utenlandske Røde Kors



Taliban-styrker nærmest seg Mazar-e-Sharif, den eneste storbyen i Afghanistan som fortsatt ikke kontrolleres av Taliban. Taliban ønsker full kontroll over hele landet.

(Foto: NTB Plus/ AP)

medarbeidere ut av området i vår og har siden dratt fram og tilbake. sier Barth.

LITEN MOTSTAND

Dei fleste talende for Taliban har sagt at de ikke har liten motstand mot de siste dagers offensiv, og Taliban hevder at lokale opposisjonsledere har aliert seg med dem. Det er ikke klart hvilke grupper som i tilfelle har gått over til Taliban-styrkene.

Opposisjonen kontrollerer omrent 10 prosent av Afghanistan, forteller en i fjor tilhørende Taliban-regime. Det er imidlertid ikke nedsigende opposisjonsaliansen, som er en samling av grupper med ulik religiøs og etnisk tilhørighet. Regimet forsøker å innføre den strenge islamiske Sharia-loven i hele landet.

I forrige uke har Taliban gått til å kontrollere over området i Nord-Afghanistan, og i fjor tilhørte de seg med en konvensjon fra opposisjonen, men alliansen varte bare noen dager og et stort antall Taliban-soldater ble drept under kampane som fulgte. I september forsøkte Taliban å kjempe seg opp mot Mazar-e-Sharif, men måtte gi tapt.

IRAN

Lover å løse økonomisk floke

Irans president under sterkt press

TEHERAN: Irans

reformvennlige leder Mohamed Khatami er under sterkt press for å løse landets økonomiske problemer etter et år som president.

Det er ingen tren i oppgave Khatami står overfor, når han skal forsøke å gi sine landsmenn en viss grad av økonomisk velst.

Det har ikke vært en innstilling at det vil ta tid. Det må skje



Irans president Mohamed Khatami.

BEHOLDER SUBSIDIER

Khatami vil etterfulle økonomiske reformer i en ferskmyte satsende på atterstøtten for sin innsettelser som president, men gikk ikke i detaljer om hva reformene vil innebære. I den men enn en time lange takten takslet Khatami trærne for deres

mindre avhengig

av oljeinntekter, få bukt med inflasjonen og nedbetalte utenriksfeld, sier presidenten.

Det er også et sterkt

socialt utfordring

med talmodighet i en vanskelig økonomisk situasjon.

Han røpt at subsidiene på medisiner og på de viktigste matvarer vil bli beholdt, slik at vanlige iranere skal få beholde sin kopegraffest mens ubevege tilbake tilbake til regjeringen vil forsøke å stimulere den private sektor og innby iranere i utlandet til å investere i den hjemlige økonomien.

DVYSTE TALL

Iran sier med en galoppende inflasjon, som offisielt er på 20 prosent på årssbasis, men som en del av verdenes økonomi vil virke litt lenger. Det høyeste inflasjonen skal dessverre ha en utenlandske

gjeld på mer enn 100 milliarder kroner, som landet har lovet å nedbetale innen 2001.

(NTB-Reuters-DPA)

Russene tilbake i Afghanistan

Sender våpen: Russland har i all hemmelighet startet en ny Afghanistan-krig. Russene sender penger og våpen til geriljagrupper som kjemper mot de fundamentalistiske Taliban-styrkene.

PIERRE COLLIGNON
Moskva

Det er snart ti år siden den sovjet-russiske hæren forlot Afghanistan – slitt og ydmykt. Men nå er russene tilbake i det krigshjerde fjelandet. Denne gangen sender de ingen soldater, og de kommer ikke for å ekspandere verdenskommunismen – men for å sikre nye oljekilder og forebygge fundamentalistiske opprør i Russlands sørligste regioner.

Taliban tar nøkkelby i nord

KABUL: Taliban-militisen i Afghanistan har tatt kontroll over en nøkkelby i et område som opposisjonen kontrollerer nord i landet, ifølge en talsmann for bevegelsen. Taliban-talsmann Abdul Hai Mutameen sa søndag at styrkene møtte liten motstand da de inntok Shiberghan i Jozjon-provinsen. Han sa alle installasjoner i byen, inkludert flyplassen, nå var under Taliban-kontroll. Det var krigsherren Abdur Rashid Dostum som regierte her før.

BT 3/8-98

Skal man tro amerikanske etterretningssporter, smugler russene tunge våpen inn i Afghanistan for å støtte den sakkalte Nordafghanismen som fortsatt har kontroll med den nordligste delen av landet. Stortparten av Afghanistan er i dag kontrollert av Taliban som har innført islamisk lov i Kabul.

Russene gir også eksperthjelp og trening til Nordafghanismens soldater, og dermed oppfører paratoksal sammenfall i det evige maktspill om Afghanistan.

Spydspiss

På lag med Iran
Russia befinner seg nå på samme lag som det iranske prestestyrket som ikke utsør Taliban-krigerne fordi de er sunnimuslimer. På lengre sikt hoper både Iran og Russland å få vennliggjennemlede ledere ved makten i Afghanistan fordi landet kan få en avgjørende posisjon for transport av olje fra

feltene i Kaspihavet. Det er antatt at Iran sender enda flere våpen, penger og drivstoff til Nordafghanismen.

En av mottagene heter Ahmad Shah Massood. Han satte tidligere sin øre i å drepe så mange russere som mulig. Under krigen i 1980-årene mot de sovjetiske okkupantene var «frigjøringskrigeren» Massod en av hovedmørtogene for skjult støtte fra den amerikanske etterretningstjenesten, CIA.

Store arsenaler

Nå mottar Nordafghanismen imidlertid så mye støtte at den har kunnetholdt sine posisjoner.

Det russiske Forsvarsdepartementet aviserer at det yter støtte til partene i borgerkrigen i Afghanistan – men det skal kanskje ikke tas alvorlig.

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Ifølge amerikanske etterretningskilder har både Nordafghanismen og Taliban i dag så store våpenarsenalene at de nødvendigvis må motta hjelpe utenfra.

Bølle slidet her russiske panser-

vogner, kanoner, bombekastere og kampfly som MiG-21 og SU-17.

Mange av våpene stammer fra den

med 20 000 utstasjonerte soldater. Herfra fraktes materiell og våpen til Massoods styrker inne i Afghanistan.

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KLASSEKAMPEN

15.8.98

Taliban erobrer nye byer

Den afganske Taliban-militsen erobret onsdag to nye byer nord i landet, og står nå på grensa til nabolandet Usbekistan. Den væpnede opposisjonen i landet er dermed nesten knust.

Ifølge en talsmann for Taliban-regimentet er soldatene liten motstand da de onsdag erobret den strategisk viktige byen Pul-i-Khumri i Baghlan-provinsen.

Det pakistansk-baserte ryhetsbyrået Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) meldte samtidig at Taliban-militsen hadde

hengig hold.

Om Nahrin har fått har Mashhood mistet sin viktige forsyningsrute til Panjshir-dalen, 90 kilometer nordøst for Kabul, hvor han hadde tilhold i de ti årene han kjempet mot de sovjetiske okkupasjonsstyrkene i landet.

NTB

AFTEN POSTEN

Taliban stopper Kirkens Nødhjelp

Kirkens Nødhjelps kontorer i Afghanistan ble i går stengt av det beinhardt Taliban-regiment. Både kontoret og privatboligene til de norske ansatte i Kabul ble forseglet av talibane sent i går ettermiddag lokal tid.

Det er for tiden ingen norske ansatte i Afghanistan. Toril Borud reiste ut av landet fredag, mens Jan Åhlander som hadde planer på reise inn, ikke får tillate seg. Han befinner seg i Pakistan.

Nærmere 40 frivillige organisasjoner er nå blitt stengt, angivelig fordi de ikke får tillate seg å samle sine kontorer i et utbommet skolekompleks uten vann og strøm, og uten tak og vinduer.

– Vi hadde lørdag et møte med utenriksdepartementet i Afghanistan, som ga oss et visst

håp om at det var grunnlag for forhandlinger. Men i dag ble det gjort klart for oss at alle de utenlandske organisasjonene skal behandles likt, sier utenlandssef i Kirkens Nødhjelp, Stein Vilumstad, til NTB. Vilumstad understreker at Kirkens Nødhjelps lokale partnere får fortsette å arbeide.

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LN



Dagbladet 980812

BURQA: Før gikk jentene nord i Afghanistan i døgengenser på universitet. Taliban rykket inn fram i nord, og jentene må gå sløret i det lite populære tettsittende plagget, burqaen, og være hjemme.

Foto: NTB/AFP

Tvinges bak sløret

Før helga var Mazar-i-Sharif den mest vestlige og liberale byen i Afghanistan. Nå blir jentene tvunget bak sløret og ut av skolene, brennevinet helt ut, TV og musikk forbudt og amputasjoner og steining innført som straffesystem.

Av JAN-ERIK SMILDEIN

Det merkes godt at Taliban har erobret byen og tatt makt.

En gruppe talibanner skal være på vei fra hovedstaden Kabul for å starte sin islamiseringsopprør i Mazar-i-Sharif.

Det ikke innbyggende i byen dødig. Et dødig er etniske usbekere, som tradisjonelt har

hatt et liberalt forhold til islam. Olabukene har vært en del av skolekonservativen til jentene på universitetet i byen. Nå må de sluttet å studere, og byen ser inn i det forhvette «telet»-burqaen, som resten av Afghanistans kvinner.

Får hjelp

På noen få dager har Taliban tatt store områder i Nord-Afghanistan, og det holdes krisemøter i nabolandene.

De skjeggete Allah krigere skal ikke stå bort etter klosteret fra grensa til Turkmenistan, og de nærmer seg også Usbekistans grense. Tadsjikis-

stan har forsterket grensa si og har hjelpt med 25 000 russiske soldater som er stasjonert i landet.

Også Iran er bekymret. 11 iranske diplomater er forsømt i Mazar-i-Sharif, trolig tatt i fange av Taliban-soldater.

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Fare for storkonflikt

En indisk, en kinesisk og en kambodjansk garnison er i Sør-Central-Asia og leverer forstørrelsen til Taliban. De skal prøve å eksportere sin islamiske revolusjon over grensa. De frykter også store flyktningstrømmer og smuggling av våpen. Også russiske soldater og statskriminalister er utvilknet til landet.

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Tusenvis av afghanere er på flukt etter Taliban-fangene fra universitetet i Mazar-i-Sharif som ikke har fått mat, medisiner og husly. De fleste har samlet seg i grenseområdene til Tadsjikistan og Usbekistan, men kommer ikke over grensa. De har internasjonale hjelpeorganisasjoner fra flere etater i flyktningekatastrofen.

I London hevder Afghanistan-opposisjonen at Taliban har tatt over Nort Afghanistan, og at motangrep er på trappene. Det kan være for sent.

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Taliban får mer kontroll

der sekretet inndelte nedlagt.

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For en gangs skyld er ikke iranere hovedmistenkte etter et terrorattentat. Kanskje passer det bedre med en saudi-araber i eksil denne gang.

Den opportune terrorist

I Syrias hovedstad Damaskus sitter en aldrende terrorist ved navn Ahmed Jibril. Både innen israelsk og amerikansk etterretningstjeneste er mange av den oppfatning at hans organisasjon, PFLP-generalkommandoen, sto bak nedskytingen av det amerikanske Pan Am-flyet over Lockerbie i Skottland for snart ti år siden. Men Libyas diktator Muammar Kadhafi er utpekt som hovedskyldig og to libyske agenter ettersøkt for terroraksjonen.

At de to libyrene kan ha deltatt i aksjonen som drepte 270 mennesker, er det rimelig grunn til å tro. Men hovedmannen kan altså hete Ahmed Jibril.

Når han ikke gás nøyere etter i sommene og ikke blir forlangt utleverert, er hovedårsakén trølig at han holder til i Syria. Syrias diktator Hafez al-Assad spiller på

med USA i fredsprosessen i Midtøsten, derfor kan ikke han og hans land røres.

■■ Slik er den internasjonale dobbeltmoral. Når det gjennomføres terroraksjoner, er det ikke bare viktig at sporene peker mot et land eller en person som har gjort seg beryktet for slike handlinger. Det bør også være en terrorist som passer inn i bildet - akkurat der og da. En slik er Osama Bin Laden, som anses å være hovedmistenkt for bombeattentatene mot de amerikanske ambassadene i Kenya og Tanzania sist fredag.

■■ Den styrke saudiarabene Bin Laden har erklært hellig krig mot amerikanere, både sivile og militære, selv om han fikk sin oppstigning av CIA i Afghanistan på 80-tallet. Han er mistenkt for en rekke terroraksjoner, inkludert bomben i World Trade Center i New York i 1993 og aksjonen som kostet 19 amerikanske soldater livet i Saudi-Arabia i 1996. Motivene skulle altså være til stede i tilstrekkelig grad når det gjelder fredagens terrorbombing. Bort-

- Interneringsleirer: - Taliban-regimet i Afghanistan gjennomfører en etnisk rensing i nordområdene i Afghanistan, sier den afganske opposisjonslederen Ashed Walli til Bergens Tidende.

- Interneringsleirer bygges i de nordlige områdene beregnet for afganske minoriteter. Samtidig tvinges tusenvis av mennesker på flykt gjennom uregnet fjell og ørkenlandskap. Det som foregår i Afghanistan nå kan bare sammenlignes med Hitlers «Jedefortøjer geiser under krigen», sier opposisjonslederen Ashed Walli, som holder til i London, er talismann for det afganske opposisjonslederen Ahmed Shah Masood som var forsvarssjef i det styrte regimet i Afghanistan.

Situasjonen er blitt kraftig forverret da sistte ukene etter at Taliban-milisen satte i gang en offensiv i de nordøstlige områder, og flere av opposisjonslederne har fått.

- Taliban forsøk på å utrydde afganske folkegrupper er en situasjon vi har fortsett gjennom mange år. Taliban-regimet er blitt bygd opp ved palestinske biegelærere, og systematisk forsøkt til å ødelegge bok, med krigsutstyr, men også med personell og rådgivere. Pakistansk, iransk, iraqisk, sterke afganske, økonomiske interesser. For tiden ledes forsyningene til den pakistanske hæren, hovedstaden afghaniske opposisjonsledelsen.

Den afganske opposisjonen har forsøkt å fortelle den vestlige verden om den saudiarabiske «miflyktelsen» over Taliban i mange år. - Vi har vært i New York og fortalt om situasjonen i FN. Vi har også fortalt om situasjonen i vårt hjemland for fremstående representanter for amerikanske myndigheter og representanter for flere land i Vest-Europa. Men hittil har vi snakket for dobbel. Først når amerikanske ambassader blir bombet, våkner den vestlige verden. Det er et paradoks.

- Etnisk rensing i Afghanistan

RAGNHILD HØY

Interneringsleirer: - Taliban-regimet i Afghanistan gjennomfører en etnisk rensing i nordområdene i Afghanistan, sier den afganske opposisjonslederen Ashed Walli til Bergens Tidende.



SIDE 2

med USA i fredsprosessen i Midtøsten, derfor kan ikke han og hans land røres.

■■ Slik er den internasjonale dobbeltmoral. Når det gjennomføres terroraksjoner, er det ikke bare viktig at sporene peker mot et land eller en person som har gjort seg beryktet for slike handlinger. Det bør også være en terrorist som passer inn i bildet - akkurat der og da. En slik er Osama Bin Laden, som anses å være hovedmistenkt for en rekke terroraksjoner, inkludert bomben i

sett fra et faktum som ikke får disse mistankene til å rime noe særlig:

■■ Osama Bin Laden har sitt hovedkvarter like utefor Kandahar i Afghanistan, under den styrende Taliban-regjeringens beskyttende vinger. Taliban ønsker ingen åpen konflikt med USA og vice versa. Årsaken er at Afghanistan er transitland for den planlagte oljerørlæringen fra Turkmenistan til Pakistan. Strategisk, økonomisk og politisk er denne rørlæringen viktig for både Afghanistan og USA. Det er derfor forståelig når Taliban allerede har bedyret sin uskyld i forbindelse med terrorbombene i Nairobi og Dar-es-Salaam. Terrorens indre logikk, som av og til eksisterer, tilslier at Osama Bin Laden neppe ville ta sjansen på en slik aksjon nå, av frykt for å bli kastet ut av Afghanistan. At talibanene selv

skulle være medskyldige, synes heller ikke særlig logisk, ikke minst når de i disse dager er i ferd med å sikre seg kontroll over hele Afghanistan - uten at Vesten løfter en finger.

■■ Men hvor er så Iran, Irak eller Libya? Det er påfølgende at ikke terrormistanken denne gang i første rekke retter seg mot presteskapet i Teheran. Når heller ikke Saddam Hussein eller Muammar Kadhafi får skylda, ja, da må det være noe riktig rart. Kanskje er det ikke opportunt å rette blittet mot Teheran, Bagdad eller Tripoli akkurat nå.

■■ USA er sakte, men sikrert i ferd med å bedre forholdet sitt til Iran og satsers på den moderate president Mohammad Khatami. Da er det greit å gå stille i dørene når det gjelder terrorbeskyldninger. Amerikanerne er heller ikke interessert

i en ny konflikt med Saddam, til tross for at han igjen har stanset samarbeidet med FNs våpeninspektører. Når det gjelder Libya, er dora på gjørt for at de to mistenkte for attentatet over Lockerbie kan stilles for retten i Nederland. Da er det stort sett bare Osama Bin Laden igjen skyldig eller ikke skyldig.

■■ På 70- og 80-tallet fikk Carlos, alias Sjakalen, og Abu Nidal skylda for de fleste av verdens terroraksjoner. Både mørksemedia og vestlige regjeringer var raske til å peke ut de to terroristlederne som hovedmistenker hver gang det smalt nøstet. Riktignok hadde begge et alvorlig rulleblad - men etterpå da har vist at de enkelte ganger fikk ufortjent stor oppmerksomhet.

Men det var liksom så trygt og opportunt å skynde på dem.

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Kampen om Afghanistan

BA

ONSDAG 26. AUGUST 1



• IKKE PERIFERI: Pakistans besittelse av atombomber gir konflikten i området til en affer som har betydning for Vestens sikkerhet. Dette bildet er fra prøvesprøvingen 28. mai i år.

For noen dager siden var det en skyteepisode på grensen mellom Iran og Afghanistan. Den er tusen kilometer lang og går til dels gjennom ørken og strok. I dette tilfallet var det iranske grensevakter beskutt. De skjøt tilbake mot de afganske angriperne og ba om forsterkning. Og noe unntatt var det en intern skuddveksling.

Øverstkommandementsmann for Irans revolusjonære garde, general Rahim Safavi, uttalte: «Vi vil ikke tale til situasjonen blir ustabil. Da vil vi bruke makt».

Episoden avslører det spente forholdet mellom Irak og Afghanistan. Langsamt og sikkert har det forverret seg helt fra Talibanbevegelsen begynte å bli en maktfaktor i Afghanistan.

Under sovjetokkupasjonen av Afghanistan fra 1979 til 1989 flyktet cirka fire millioner afganere til Iran. Vel en million har returnert til Afghanistan, men storparten oppholder seg fremdeles i Iran fordi Taliban helst ikke vil ha dem tilbake.

Dette er en del av kampen mellom Iran og Pakistan om dominans i Afghanistan. Taliban ble skapt av den pakistanske etterretningstjenesten, en av de mektigste faktorene i dagens Pakistan. I all hemmelighet gikk sivilskilte, pakistanske etterretningsoffiserer rundt i de afganske flyktningeleirene og vernet og afganske unndommer, og det bed ikke på problemer, for mange av dem ville enn gjerne kjempe mot sovjetokkupantene som i mange tilfelle hadde drept høye slettkjempere.

I Pakistan dominerer sunniretningen innen islam, og pakistannerne sørget for at sunnimuslimer fikk nakkelsittengingen innen den nye Talibanhæren. Like viktig som religiøs retning er

stammetilhørighet i denne delen av verden. Den dominerende stammen i dagens Afghanistan er pat-

hanerne, og den preger også Talibanbevegelsen.

Men sold støtte fra Pakistan tilk Talibane opp kampen mot sunnakkongen i Afghanistan, og mangelen til samhold mellom dem hjalp Talibane til å nedkjempe dem. Tadsjikjedene Massoud og Rabbari vett han ikke motstand, men også de ble drevere på flukt. Den dyktige gerilajederen Massoud har ikke lagt ned våpene og bor derfor ikke avsiktene.

Talibanelederne er muslimske fundamentalister. Det innebærer blant annet at de har degradert kvinner i annenklasser til kjempet seg. Taliban har heller ikke noe til overs for vestlige hjelpeorganisasjoner, og flere av dem er derfor i ferd med å trekke seg ut. Den norske Afghanistankomiteen som har gjort og gitt en viktig humanitær innsats, har valgt å ligge lavt i terrenget og fortsette arbeidet. Det er en konstruktiv politikk til gagn for befolkningen.

Jo klarere det blir frem at Taliban er skapt og utviklet av Pakistan, desto sterkere blir motsetningen mellom Iran og Pakistan. For noen dager siden skrev den iranske avisen «Resalet»: «Iran er ikke Pakistans intrigespill lengre. Pakistan fortjener ikke å være vår venn».

Turkmenes økonomiske tilnærming bidrar til å vanskliggjøre forholdet mellom Iran og Pakistan. Begge ønsker å bli transitland og utsiktingested for oljen fra Sentral-Asia, og for begge er Afghanistan et viktig bindledd. En opprør i Afghanistan kan skape pluss et afghansk forhandler for tiden med Taliban om å bygge en gassledning fra Turkmenistan gjennom Afghanistan og Pakistan til havet. Prisen ansås til 14,5 milliarder kroner.

I dag er Afghanistan en betydelig produsent og eksporter av narkotiske stoffer, og Taliban sikrer seg en stadig større del av denne fortjenesten. Det er ikke de eneste lysky afferene Taliban er innblandet i, og de pakistanske myndighetene velger derfor å holde en viss distanse til fundamentalistene i Kabul, den afghanske hovedstaden.

Jo grundigere Taliban blir avslart, desto dypere klof mellom Iran og Pakistan. Pakistan har anskaffet seg atomvåpen, først og fremst som motvekt mot Indias kjernedyktige våpen, men også som en gardering mot Iran, som om ikke lenger har stikk med disse massedeggelsesvåpnene.

Det innebærer at dette problemkomplekset ikke er en perifer affer, men har betydning for Vestens sikkerhet.

• SYNPUNKT

ALBERT
HENRIK
MOHN



Iran advarer «usle» Taliban

TEHERAN: Irans øverste leder Ayatollah Ali Khamenei advarer i sterke ordalag Taliban i nabolandet Afghanistan mot å skape spenninger ved grensen. Amnesty International er bekymret over nye rapporter om massedrap. Denne yndkelige og verdiløse gruppen som verken har forståelse for Islam eller politikk har rast fram i Afghanistan. Men Taliban vil ikke være i stand til å fullstøtt sitt mål, sa Khamenei på et offentlig møte i Teheran tirsdag. Den iranske lederen omtalte den fundamentalistiske sunni-bevegelsen som en umoden og bedragerisk gruppe oppfunnet av Irans

Udlændinge forlader Kabul

Hjælpearbejde i svær klemme i Afghanistan

2/7 - 98 / M F Ø T M C U O M

Mandag lukkede Taleban-militsen 35 nødhjælpskontorer i Kabul. EU stopper al støtte i protest. Røde Kors fortsætter dog arbejdet

Af PETER MØHRING

Talebans planlægningsmester, Qari Deen Muhammed, aviserede, at andre organisationer vil blive bedt om at overtage de forviste organisationers arbejde. »Det er ikke aktuelt lige nu. Gud har tidligere givet os mad – det vil han fortsætte med,« siger han.

Vestlig trussel

Den evige konflikt mellem den ortodokse Taleban-milits og de udenlandske nødhjælpsorganisationer, der arbejder i Afghanistan, brød endnu en gang ud i lys, da Taleban-militsen i går gjorde alvor af truslen om at lukke en række nødhjælpskontorer. Nødhjælpsarbejdere fra 35 mindre organisationer blev bedt om at forlade landet og blev truet med retsforfølgelse, hvis ikke de fulgte ordenen.

»Det er et alvorligt tilbageslag for hjælpearbejdet i Afghanistan. Det betyder, at en masse mennesker mistet muligheden for at få hjælp,« siger Laurent Jung, fra Læger Uden Grænser hovedkvarter i Paris. Læger Uden Grænser er sammen med International Røde Kors en af de hjælpeorganisationer, der ikke er blevet bedt om at forlade landet.

I protest mod Talebanernes diktat besluttede EU-Kommisionen allerede lørdag, at indstille al støtte til hjælpeprojekter i Kabul. EU er den største bidragsyder til hjælpen i Afghanistan og finansierer mange af de private organisationers arbejde.

Nødhjælpsorganisationerne har dog fået ordre på at flytte ind i primært bygning i midten af Kabul, hvis de fortsat ønskede at blive i landet.

Forsat fra forsiden...

Feks. står der i Artikel 13, at »kvinders adgang til sundhedsvesenet og uddannelses-systemet nødvendigvis må ske i etaper«, og at denne adgang skal ske »overensstemmelse med de islamiske love og den afghanske kultur.«

Det svarer til at acceptere, at de afghanske kvinder ikke skal have adgang til uddannelse eller lægebehandling, sådan som det også er tilfældet i øjeblikket. Men ikke nok med det – FN har i den samme erklæring

Talebans beslutning om at smide 35 NGO'er ud er begyndelsen til enden på den udenlandske tilstedeværelse i Afghanistan

Af JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN Liberation

De udenlandske hjælpeorganisationer var ét af de sidste lyspunkter i Kabul – én af de få, der overleverede fra den tidligere tekniske hjælpejælp. De fik beskud på at samle sig i en fældefærdig bygning uden vand, elektricitet eller vinduer, nægtede de fleste at efterkomme ordenen og gjorde sig klar til at forlade den afghanske hovedstad. Ifølge Taleban er 34 ud af 35 organisationer allerede ute af Kabul.

Samtidig har patruljer fra det stregt islamiske Taleban-slægt til mod flere organisationers lokaler, arrangeret nogle af de lokale med-

Orthodoks stat

Taleban-militsen kontrollerer nu to tredjedele af landet – og efterlever med hard hånd, hvad de mener, er Koranens budstab.

Deres religiøse politi forsøger at skabe verdens reneste muslimske stat og håndhæver religiøse normer og lover. Det indebærer blandt andet, at mænd ikke må klippe deres skæg, at kvinder ikke må forlade deres hjem uden at være helt tilslækket fra top til tå, samtidig med at de skal ledes af en blodhedslægt mand.

For de danske kvinder, der arbejder for Røde Kors i Kabul, betyder det, at de ikke må gå ud alene, og skal være tilstede. Samtidig må de ikke være bil.

»Men det er ikke usædvanligt. Sådan var det også i Pakistan og andre af de meget muslimske lande, som vi arbejder i. Det ved man, når man bliver sendt ud, og det må man respektere,« fortæller Jette Sørensen.

Taleban har også indført en række middelederlige straf-femeder, som pisk, afhængig af lemmers og stenning for en lang række forsejser, blandt andet utroskab og homoseksualitet.

Pakistan, Saudi-Arabien og De Forenede Arabiske Emirater er de eneste lande, som anerkender Taleban-regeringen.

arbejdere og forsøget dørene til såvel kontorerne som udenlandsnes boliger.

»Vi er ikke overrasket. Det er blot den seneste provokation med det formål at få os til at rejse,« siger Danièle Faure-Lambert fra Aide Médicale Internationale, hvis ti klinikker – trods myndighedernes restriktioner – har hjulpet omkring tusind kvinder og børn om måneden.

»Det er enden på de udenlandske NGO'ers tilstedeværelse i Kabul, og formentlig begyndelsen til enden for alle udlandselementerne,« siger Emma Bonino, der er EU's kommissær for humanitær bistand.

Allerede den 29. juni besluttede talebanerne, der har været ved magten i Kabul siden oktober 1994, at indlede en offensiv mod de udenlandske organisationer. Det vigtigste anklagepunkt mod dem var deres protester mod, at afghanske kvinder har forbud mod at arbejde og studere eller modtage lægehjælp.

De fik ordre til at flytte til den tidlige tekniske hjælpejælp. Den 14. juli utsledte talebanerne så et ultimatum til de omkring 30 NGO'er, der arbejdede i byen.

Derimod oprettedes bistanden til andre dele af landet på ca. 45 millioner kr.

Talebanernes svar kom sjællig: De lukkede EU's representation i den afghanske hovedstad, som ellers havde halvdiplomatisk status.

»Det er en ny form for chikanie, som ikke rokker ved Kommissionens vilje til at afhjælpe det afghanske folks lidelse,« siger en talsmand for Emma Bonino, der er EU's kommissær for humanitær bistand.

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NGO'erne ser forklaringen på talebanernes seneste stramning i en aftale, som FN den 13. maj underskrev sammen med det »islamiske emirat Afghanistan«.

I dette dokument legitimerer FN indirekte talebanernes politik, især deres diskrimination af kvinder. Ved at underskrive aftalen anerkender Martin Griffiths, der er næstkommanderende for FN's nødhjælpsarbejde, at en krinde er mindre værd end en mand:

»Vi nægterde at flytte ikke fordi det kvarter, de ville samle os i, er ubehørligt, men

stationer i Kabul understreges, at det vil få »katastrofale konsekvenser« for hovedstadsområdet omkring 800.000 indbyggere, hvis de skal undvære den udenlandske bistand.

Talebanerne er travlt optaget af at føre krig i den nordlige del af landet og har hidtil ikke interesseret sig meget for at få byens administration til at fungere.

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Udlændinge forlader...

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»Det er klart, at talebanerne har benyttet sig af FN's underskrift til at samle os sammen på ét sted. Den har opmuntret dem,« Alain Bonet, leder af organisationen Solidarités.

»Ved at boje sig for alle talebanernes krav har FN skabt en præcedens. På den måde har verdensorganisationen spændt ben for de NGO'er, som hver dag kæmper for at få lov til at arbejde i Kabul,« siger Pierre Pascal Vendini.

I øjeblikket venter alle på FN's reaktion. Lederne af de private humanitære organisationer

Dansk press

Forstørtes side 5...

fordi det ville blive en ghetto for udlændinge uden kontakt med befolkningen. Det er ikke acceptabelt for os, kontakten er en afgørende forudsætning for vores arbejde,« fremhæver Pierre Pascal Vendini, der er koordinator for Læger Uden Grænser i Afghanistan.

Organisationen nægter nu såvel at forlade Kabul som at flytte ind i den tekniske hjælpskole og forventer derfor at blive udvist af landet.

FN-aftale banede vej

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Oversat af Birgit Ibsen.

Truslen fra talibaneerne

Talibaneerne er nu rykket helt frem til den afghanske grænse mod de central-asiatiske stater og står her bl.a. over for 20.000 russiske soldater. Tadsjikistan beder om flere SNG-styrker. Er den regionale sikkerhed truet?



Af OLE NYNG

by i Takhar-provinsen, der grænser op til Tadsjikistan. Ifølge samme kilder møder talibanehaven ingen eller kun ringe modstand, hvilket de nær frem. De til oppositions-alliancen gennem de seneste to år, men etnisk modstættelse og personlig rivalisering mellem de to hovedstyrer har hindret den, falles indstads på slagmarken, der måske kunne have stoppet talibaneerne.

Den øye udvikling har – som det kunne ventes – fået nabolandene til at reagere skarpt.

Iran krævede allerede sendt FN-indgraben i konflikten, efter at talibansktærke angiveligt skulde have stormet det iranske konsulat i Mazari-Sharif og taget de dervarende 12 iranske statsborgerne som gudsret.

Men også Afghanistans nabor mod nord har reageret kraftigt – først og fremmest Tadsjikistan, hvor der først er indgået en – skrabelig – afhenvile efter fem års borgerkrig mellem den moskva-støttede regering, der fortrinsvis består af etniske tadsjikister, og en alliance af islamiske oprgrupper med baser på den afghanske side af grænsen.

Allerede sendt dag gav den tadsjikiske regering orde til, at tadsjikiske styrker skulle sætte i fuld alarmberedskab, og tirsdag, appellerede den tadsjikiske regering til dens partnere i det post-kommunistiske statssamfund, det øllets henslumrende SNG, om at hjælpe landets lange, bjergiske grænse til Afghanistan.

Talibaneernes fortætte offensiv bragte den ondskede frem til grænsen til de to tidligere sovjetrepublikker Uzbekistan og Tadsjikistan.

Talibaneernes talisman, Abdul Hayev Mutmaen, erklaerede over for ryhedsbureauet Rauer, at talibanehaven havde indtaget den strategiske beliggenhed by Puli-Khumri i Baghlan-provinsen og det Pakistan-baserede ryhedsbureau *Afghanistan Islamic Press* meddelede, at talibaneerne også havde erobret byen Heratana, en flodhavn ved den afghanske-ubekiske grænse. Tirsdag erobredes styrker under høje den russiske talibansktærke Falagan, hoved-



AFGHANISTAN – Talibanernes fremmarch skaber frygt hos nabolandene

med deltagelse af UTO er ikke bragt til ende, og der har været flere brud på våbenhvilen. Freden er yderst skybellig.

I Usbekistan bekender landets godt som enevældige hersker, den gamle kommunistiske Islam Karimov sig ganske vist til islam, og han har siden ihafttagningen i 1991 tilsluttet restaurering eller opførelse af sneveser af moskeer og koranskoler.

Men samtidigt har Karimov bekæmpet enhver forsøg fra mere fundamentalistiske grupper af islam på at få ro i Usbekistans 22 mio. indbyggere.

For ghebliget slår myndighederne hårdt ned på den fundamentalistiske, saud-orienterede Wahabitsk, hvilket institutionen lukkes og lederes fængsles og deporteres.

Hvad ollen og gassen angår, ligger der allerede et konkret projekt, den såkaldte sydvestlige rute, udarbejdet af det amerikanske olieselskab Unocal, som vil føre en rute fra det iranske olie, en til naturgas – fra de rigelige felter i Turkmenistan (med mulighed for tillægning til fælles i Det Kaspiiske Hav og Kasakhstan) gennem Afghanistan til Pakistan (og måske senere India).

Geografisk er linjen optimal, men politisk har den været vanskeligt at realisere på grund af den politiske usæddelighed i Afghanistan.

Hvis talibaneerne med sine

sejre sætter sig tungt på regeringen og måske kommer ud at den internationale isolationskampagnen.

Hvilket ige kan være et ele-

ment i den voldsonne modstand

mod talibaneerne, som konkurren-

terne Usbekistan og Rusland gi-

ver udtryk for.

trykker det. De (talibaneerne, red.) har endnu ikke etableret kontrollørt over det afghanske territorium og har andre problemer at få klare end at rykke ind i andres land.

Den russiske og centralasiatiske opstandelse over udgangen til talibaneernes sejre skyldes flere ting:

■ Bekymring over den skebne, de af etniske bryder, de afghanske usæbeker og tadsjikker, nu står over for under et radikalt og formentlig hærverdig tilsynsstyre (herunder bekymring over deres flygtningeprøvning).

■ Frygten for, at en talibane-sejre vil styrke en radikal grøn af islam, faste i form af islamiske, men sekulære centralasiatiske stater. ■ Endelig spiller olie- og gasinteresser en vis rolle.

Frygten for den radikale islam

er sa etisk både i Moskva og i

flere af de central-

asiatiske republikker,

at Rusland, Usbekistan og Tadsjikistan er i sidste

stund i stand til at besejre den tadsjikiske regering til fuld.

Snarene er det en advarsel om,

at de 20.000 russiske styrker,

der for ghebliget hører til med at

patruljere den afghanske-tadsjikiske grænse, vil blive aktiveret,

hvis talibaneerne skulle finde

sig i Tadsjikistan.

Tadsjikistan blev en langvarig

konflikt, der Rusland, Usbekistan og Tadsjikistan på et udearigamistisk med et voldsomme styrke

opstod i sidste

års del af 1979-89 en for dyrebar og traumatisk faktik.

Snarene er det en advarsel om,

at overordne grænsen. En meget usandtig mulighed. Som grænsestyrkernes overbefælende, general Nikolai Resnitjenko, ud-

trykkede den 28. august 1988:

■ **INFORMATIONS NYHEDSANALYSE**

■ **3/8 – 78**

Terrorister til leje

Politiken
7/9-98

Islamiske fundamentalister trænes i Afghanistan, inden de sniger sig ind i Kashmir

Af Nis Olsen,
Politiken, New Delhi

Mohammad Khalid slap heligt fra det amerikanske missilangreb på terroristleder Osama bin Ladens lejr i Afghanistan. Han blev kun såret, mens 21 andre blev dræbt. Nu er han overført fra Afghanistan til sit hjemland Pakistan, hvor han ligger på hospital i Rawalpindi nær hovedstaden Islamabad.

Det var ikke noget tilfælde, at Mohammad Khalid var i en terroristlejr i Afghanistan. Han var under træning til at infiltrere den indiske del af Kashmir, hvor et stigende antal udenlandske lejesoldater har overtaget islamisk Jihad, den 'hellige krig' for at gøre Kashmir muslimsk.

- FN siger, at Kashmir skal være frit. Pakistan gør intet. De har endda lukket alle (den militante islamiske gruppe) Harkat-ul-Ansars kontorer. Derfor inviterede Taleban os til at træne i Afghanistan, forklarer Mohammad Khalid fra sin sygeseng.

Terroristlederen bin Laden var medlem af Harkat-ul-Ansar, der officielt har skiftet navn til Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, efter at USA satte gruppen på listen over terroristorganisationer.

Gruppen har hovedkontor i Pakistan og træningslejre i Afghanistan. Ifølge en amerikansk efterretningsrapport har den 'flere tusinde bevæbnete medlemmer i den indiske og den pakistanske del af Kashmir og i selve Pakistan'.

Bin Laden sagde tidligere på året i et interview i sit afghanske skjulested, at Pa-



kistan burde starte træningslejre for en hellig krig i Kashmir, og at landet skulle åbne sine grænser for frivillige, der vil infiltrere den indiske del.

De fremmede

Siden muslimske terrorhandlinger blev optrappet i det indiske Kashmir i 1988, har kampene skiftet karakter. I begyndelsen var det lokale kashmirere, der førte an med støtte i form af våben og penge fra Pakistan. Men de lokale blev trætte og opgav angrebene, så den indiske hær fik sikret den omstridte provins. Men i de seneste år er fremmede terrorister trængt ind og har overtaget kampene. I 1996 hævdede den indiske hær at have dræbt 107 identificerede fremmede terrorister fra blandt andet Afghanistan, Tjetjenien og Egypten. I år er der dræbt 137. Men til de identificerede tal kommer næsten lige så mange uidentificerede.

- Der er blevet færre og

færre af de lokale militante muslimer. Det virker som om, at den pakistanske efterretningstjeneste ikke har til lid til, at de er gode nok til hellig krig. De lokale er røget ud på et sidespor, og de fremmede har overtaget terrorangrebene, vurderer brigadegeneral A. K. Chopra fra det 15. armekorps, som styrer den centrale del af indisk Kashmir.

For pengenes skyld

Ifølge militære kilder skjuler der sig omkring 700 fremmede lejesoldater i Kashmir. Her angriber de engang imellem indiske militærposter, men oftere går det ud over civile mål som busser eller landsbyer med hinduistiske beboere. I de sidste to måneder er over 100 civile dræbt under terrorangreb på flere landsbyer i Kashmir og over grænsen i nabostaten Himachal Pradesh. De skaber også opmærksomhed om den omstridte delstat ved at lægge miner for militærrets eller politiets køretøjer.

Men er det religionen eller pengene, der lokker? Brigadegeneralen er ikke i tvivl:

- De siger at komme for hellig krig, men mange kommer for pengenes skyld. For en fattig afghuner er nogle tusinde kroner mange penge, siger A. K. Chopra.

Tilfangetagne lejesoldater har afsøret, at de almindeligvis melder sig på en to-årig kontrakt for 400.000 rupi, godt 60.000 kroner. Halvdelen bliver udbetalt på forskud til familien, resten får han selv ved kontraktens udløb. Desuden gives der tillæg for terrorhandlinger, som udløser international opmærksomhed. Og der er forskellige tillæg for at dræbe en indisk officer eller en mening.

Som fremmede er lejesoldaterne afhængige af lokal hjælp for at kunne orientere sig i terrænet. Det leveres af en gruppe, der kaldes Hizbul Mujahideen. Efterretningsoplysninger tyder på, at Harkat-ul-Mujahideen er i gang med at opbygge sit eget lokale netværk. Men Harkat er kun en ud af fem udenlandske terrorgrupper, der opérerer i Kashmir.

Kamp til døden

Myten om lejesoldaternes fanatisme hænger sammen med, at de næsten altid kæmper til døden, hvis de støder ind i det indiske militær. De har ikke noget at miste, for de færreste overlever, selv om de overgiver sig.

- Vores instruktioner lyder på, at vi ikke skal vise nogen nåde. En fremmed med et våben skal elimineres. Og

det gør vi for at understrege ude omkring, at vi ikke vil tolerere disse lejesoldater. Hvis en kashmirer vil overgive sig, er det noget helt andet, siger generaløjtnant Krishan Pal, som er kommandør for det 15. korps, der er baseret i Kashmirs hovedstad Srinagar.

Det forklarer voldsomheden i sammenstødene mellem hæren og lejesoldaterne.

Narko

- De fremmede er ikke ligesom de lokale, der er hurtige til at overgive sig, konstaterer oberst V. K. Patil, som ledede kampen.

Årsagen er måske, at de lokale er dårligere betalt end lejesoldaterne. De får 2.500 rupi, 400 kroner, om måneden. Hvis de bliver skudt, modtager familien en erstatning på mellem 20.000 og

30.000 rupi, 3.000 til 5.000 kroner.

De fremmede lejetropper har bragt en ny form for terror til området: Narko. I år er 20 kg heroin fundet på et skjulested for terrorister. De indiske myndigheder er overbeviste om, at narkoen var på vej til New Delhi eller Bombay.

To bolster morale on the battlefield, the Taliban are waging an even fiercer war—on the freedoms of Afghanistan's women. An exclusive report. BY CARLA POWER

City of Secrets

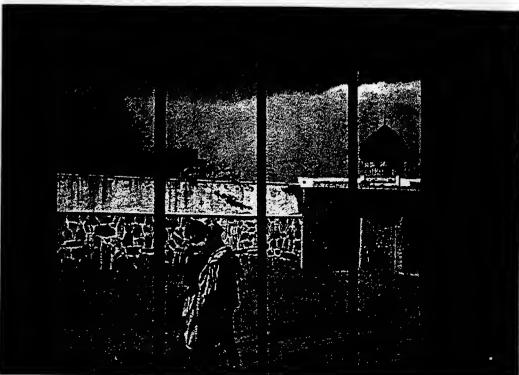
A NEWLY COINED SAYING IS making the rounds in the Kabul bazaars: "There's a Taliban under every stone." Fear breeds hyperbole, of course, but the Afghan capital seems to bristle with the Taliban. Bearded, with black turbans, and black kohl rimming their eyes to ward off evil spirits, they are young, high on the Koran and battle, and, except the schooling they received in rural religious seminaries, uneducated. Squads from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice roar around in red Toyota pickup trucks dotted with decals—"Power." "No car satisfy me but this." Though public beatings are banned, some Talibis carry wicked-looking whips of leather or electrical cable,

ready to be used on anything they deem "un-Islamic"—like a man's shaved cheek or a woman's exposed ankle. More than law, it's the whims of rank-and-file Talibis that rule daily life. When Kabul's citizens see a black turban or a red Toyota, women hunch in their sky-blue burkas—the all-encompassing veils they're required to wear by law—and men pluck on their beards. A Taliban edict requires that each beard be at least fist-length.

I lived in Kabul for two years as a child, right before the Russians invaded in 1979, and remember it as an ochre city smelling of roses, wood smoke and sewage. Parakeets sang in the bazaars, and kids flew bright pink and green paper kites from the dusty hills ringing the city. Not anymore. Now there's a black market in singing birds in the bazaars,

since the Taliban have outlawed them. Kites, too. (The logic of that ban is murky: "A kite is like your mother and sister—don't fly it," one kite enthusiast was told.)

Recently I returned to Afghanistan with photographer Nina Berman at the invitation of the United Nations World Food Programme, and found a Central Asian version of Kafka. When the Taliban conquered southern Afghanistan in 1996, they were heralded as gentle young scholars (*talib* means student) bringing peace to a war-weary populace. No more. Twenty-two months after taking Kabul, they seem less a government than an occupying force. Under Taliban laws—which change week to week—the little minutiae of life are turned into drama. Paint your nails, take a snapshot of a friend, blow a flute, clap to a beat, invite



Blinkered vision: Behind a burka; a Kabul street through a window

spring broke down after a week. The Taliban's second battle is against what they see as Kabul's godlessness. One fight feeds the other: these student-warriors rule Kabul with a warlike ferocity imported from the front lines. In turn, it's their zeal to Islamize the country that bolsters morale among volunteer troops. "If they get too moderate, the Taliban leaders lose the loyalty of these young boys who are their cannon fodder," explains Nancy Hatch Dupree, senior consultant to ACBAR, a Pakistan-based group of aid agencies for Afghanistan.

Women have suffered most under Taliban edicts. They may be ghostly presences on the streets, but they are crucial to Taliban rule. Protecting women's honor is arguably the most important plank in the militia's platform. "Our whole national Army and police are volunteers from conservative areas, where they believe sending girls to school is shameful," says Abdul Hakeem Mujahid, Afghanistan's ambassador to Pakistan.

The prejudices of those young volunteers now shape people's lives. One May morning, according to women who were present, four Taliban burst into a Kabul midwifery class, convinced that men were hiding somewhere. Having searched the classroom's cupboards, they ordered the women to take off their burkas. The class froze. Then one woman spoke: "If there is a man in this room, you can take us all and hang us the way you hanged President Najibullah" — the communist leader whom the Taliban hanged from a pylon in a Kabul square when they conquered the city in 1996. The stu-

a foreigner over for tea, and you've broken a Taliban edict. Contact between foreigners and Afghans is carefully watched: when Nina and I visited Afghans at home, we'd wear burkas and hope the local Taliban would take us for natives. Women are banned from working, except in the medical professions, and girls over 8 are not allowed to attend formal schools. Asked whether his 10-year-old daughter ever went out, a Kabul father shrugs sadly: "For what?"

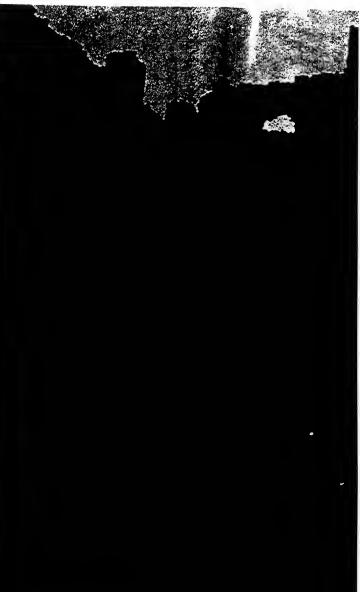
The Taliban are waging war on two fronts. The first is in the north of Afghanistan, fought against the troops of Uzbek Gen. Abdul Rashid and Tajik commander Ahmed Shah Masood. There's no immediate end in sight for the fighting, which continues to claim heavy casualties claimed on both sides: peace talks held in Pakistan this

dents stripped off their burkas. No men. The Taliban apologized — twice, "recalls a student. "I will never, ever forget that day."

Afghanistan was never an equal-opportunity society. Before the Soviet invasion, only about 1 percent of Afghanistan's girls graduated from high school, and only about 150,000 women in a country of 20 million had jobs. Many Afghans think women working in offices with men is a nasty Western import — one that will destroy the fabric of Afghan society. By shutting the schools, say Taliban leaders, they've stopped the rot of Soviet-era secular educations. Teaching women at home, and instilling solid Islamic morals, they say, will restore Afghan culture to its prewar state. "These people are on a crusade," observes Dupree. "And women are the symbol of their crusade."

Even people who hate the Taliban say that what came before them was worse. For 20 years, the country had been torn apart by fighting, first against the Soviets, and then among mujahedin factions. In the civil war following the Russian pullout in 1989, any thug with a tank or a Kalashnikov could rule a town, a neighborhood or a block. Hours after the Taliban took control of Kabul, the acting State Department spokesman in Washington said the United States saw "nothing objectionable" about their version of Islamic law. At first, Kabulis agreed: at least there was law. "For two decades there was complete anarchy," says Mujahid. "At least we have provided a normal life for the common people."

Up to a point. The rockets that killed an estimated 50,000 Kabulis and reduced whole neighborhoods to mud and rubble have mostly stopped. The Taliban's hold on about two thirds of the country has allowed them to restore electricity in seven provinces, and their enforcement of Sharia has meant that rapes, murder and banditry, commonplace



The war to end all wars: Students at a midwife training course (top left), making bread at a widows bakery (bottom), in burkas amid Kabul's rubble

during Najibullah's time, have stopped. "Nothing has ever been looted in Taliban territory," says U.N. deputy regional coordinator Brigitte Neubacher. Even the Taliban's bitterest detractors concede they stopped the rockets and restored an order of sorts. Mothers want their children to be good—unless they want the Taliban to come and eat them. Men crack Taliban jokes. (Q: What's Afghanistan's biggest import-export business? A: Facial hair.) "Time's passing, and people are starting to get used to it," says one foreign worker of Taliban rule. "It seems into your head and starts to seem normal."

Outside Kabul, Taliban rule can seem less brutal. In Logar province, 20 miles outside Kabul, women work in the fields, their faces uncovered—even though this is a Taliban stronghold. In village schools, little girls lisp their alphabets alongside their brothers. The province of Badakhshan, under the command of Masood's troops, was rocked by a devastating earthquake in late May. I flew to the region with a U.N. relief plane; injured women were rushed to hospitals and attended by male doctors, and by lipstick-wearing female surgeons. When I asked the local governor whether there were any Taliban in the quake zone, he shot

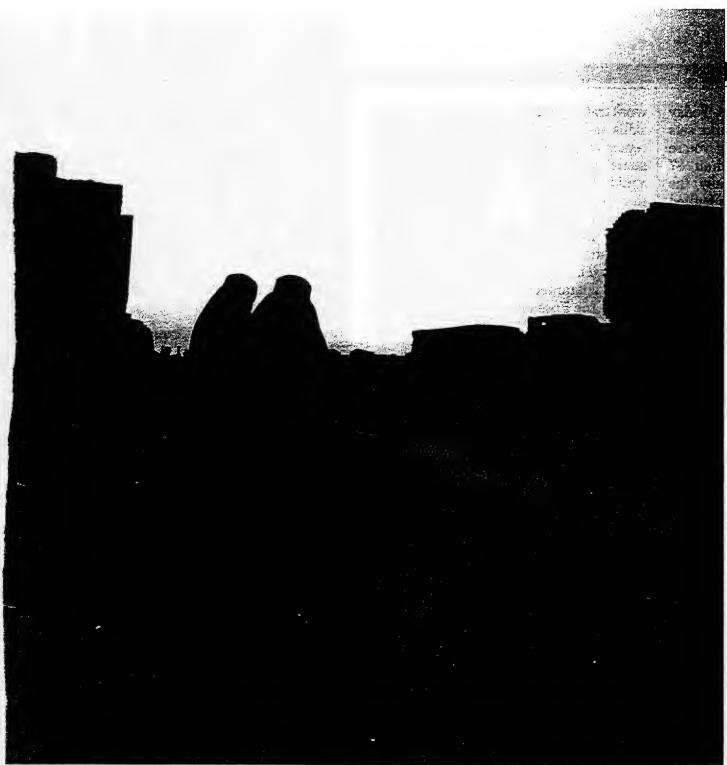
back that if there were, I wouldn't be interviewing him. But even in areas technically beyond Taliban rule, the movement's beliefs overshadow life. Many of the 1.2 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan intend to stay there, either because they want their daughters educated or because they're too frightened to return. Men in the Nasir Bagh refugee camp of Peshawar keep their beards long—just in case their parents back in Kabul get sick and they have to return. "You foreigners need visas to get into Afghanistan," one said glumly. "We need our heads."

At the heart of the Taliban's reign there is a clash of civilizations: boys from the country's villages and refugee camps against the evils of the big city. During the 1980s, Soviet rule and creeping Westernization among the elites intensified rifts between city folk and the countryside's farmers and tribes. The Taliban, convinced that Kabul is a city of sin, are intent on cleaning it up.

So they're scrubbing the life out of Kabul. Kabul's tailors used to copy Western styles from dogeared fashion magazines. But Edict No. 15 says tailors found measuring women or displaying catalogs will be jailed. "I keep them all in my head," whispers the

owner of the Gina bridal shop, showing designs for his ruffled and spangled party dresses. His sketches are headless: the Taliban, in keeping with Islamic law, have banned drawings or photos of living things. Nina had to shoot the photos for this piece on the sly—either behind compound walls or wrapping her camera in a burka and shooting through the mesh eye-screen.

KABUL HAS BECOME A CITY OF secrets. Under their burkas, women wear banned lipstick, fishnet stockings and strappy sandals chic enough for Soho nightclubs. Television is forbidden, but some people, it's said, hide satellite dishes in water tanks. Music is illegal. Police checkpoints flaunt weird streamers: magnetic tape from seized cassettes. The reckless, it's rumored, gather for dance parties at private homes. Jamila and Ali (not their real names), a brother and sister, proudly show off the banned boombox they keep veiled in a sheet. "We can dream," says Jamila, swaying to the beat of Hindi movie music in their living room. "We are very thirsty for the time of freedom." Six days a week, the former literature professor



breaks another law. She works, sneaking into her office by the back door, and counting on her burka to keep her anonymous. "We creep around like thieves," she says. Jamila is desperate to leave the city. But her job supports her family, which remains in Pakistan, where her daughters attend school.

The burka is the most obvious sign of Taliban rule. Women with glasses and asthma complain they can't see or breathe, and doctors say there has been a rise in eye ailments and car accidents because women's vision is blinder. But next to the bans on schools and jobs, the burka pales to a nuisance. "If only they'd just open the doors of the schools, we'd accept some violence for ourselves," says one woman in a trauma-counseling class at Malalai hospital. Adiba Ahmad is 24, but looks a decade older—especially in her burka. "Children call me auntie," she says, grinning ruefully. Before the Taliban came, she studied law at Kabul University. Today, she gets headaches and "anxious" when she catches sight of her lawbooks, so she's hidden them. When her five younger sisters ask her to help them practice their reading, she refuses. "I'm disappointed, so I never encourage them to read and write," she says. "There

is no clear future for me. It's dark and dull."

There may yet be a future. Informal schools and classes have sprung up in private living rooms and at nongovernmental organizations. But women say they risk whippings—or worse—by leaving their homes for class. And foreign aid groups' working conditions are precarious: last week the Taliban's Radio Shariat announced that all foreign NGOs would have to move to a compound outside the city. But the Taliban are not a monolithic bloc: there are moderates who recognize the need to work with foreign aid organizations, and who want women working and girls educated. "Some people in the department weren't very progressive in terms of the Koran and Sunna," admits Mujahid, an urbane man whose own daughter attends an English-language school in Islamabad. Yet the fractured nature of the Taliban leadership means that as some rules are relaxed, others are tightened. Two weeks ago the Taliban closed 10 home-schools for girls, fearing that they were a front for communists or Christians to proselytize. But this came a month after the Taliban agreed with the United Nations to open 11 girls' schools and allow more women to work in all-

female aid schemes. "They truly want to improve relations, and they truly want to be better understood," says Daniel Toole, a member of the United Nations negotiating team. "But they have a long way to go."

Indeed. The arbitrary nature of the Taliban rule means that for all the rhetoric about security, Kabul's citizens aren't safe. Twenty-six-year-old Shikabah was shopping with her husband when the Taliban picked them up and accused them of not being married. (It's illegal for unrelated couples to walk in Kabul streets.) "They didn't believe we were husband and wife, because my husband is much older than me," says Shikabah. "They beat him on the head; then took us home. Our children were there, and when they saw the blood, they began screaming. 'Let go of our mommy and daddy.' Then they believed us." A year on, the couple are still too scared to walk on the street together.

We were lucky. Jang, our translator and guide from the Foreign Ministry, wasn't a bit like the whip-wielding Vice and Virtue men. The 21-year-old Taliban was downy-cheeked and polite. During our tours around the city, he would nervously chew on his turban cloth. Jang barely

spoke English and, because he was raised in a refugee camp in Pakistan, didn't know Kabul. I wondered whether he'd ever spoken to women outside of his family: many Taliban, schooled in all-male religious seminaries and then sent off to battle, have had little contact with women other than their mothers and sisters. "I know what you could do to really frighten him," a middle-aged Afghan man at the United Nations said with a grin. "Touch him." We didn't dare—even our questions about landscapes and street names seemed to embarrass him. "Dear sister," he would say, giggling and burying his head in his hands. "I have never been with journalists before." I'm sure he hadn't, but he was quick at picking up the art of spin. When we first met, I asked him what he thought of the Taliban's education policy; he said he thought girls should be allowed to go to school. The next day he was more confident: "Dear sister, if people say bad things about the Taliban, it is the propaganda of the communists and sold-out people."

The Taliban's legitimacy, such as it is, rests on ridding the country of such communists and sold-out people. So the clampdown on public morality trumps everything else. The economy is wretched. Two years ago a loaf of

naan cost 500 afghanis in the bazaars. Today the bread costs 2,000 afghanis. A burka sets you back a month's salary. That's if you're paid; civil servants haven't had their \$7 monthly wage since spring. "Basically, the whole city is unemployed," says the United Nations' Neubacher.

So the aid agencies keep Kabul going. The World Food Programme gives handouts and runs 37 "widows bakeries," where the luckiest of the city's 50,000-odd war widows make bread. Aid organizations run food-for-

work training schemes, where women learn skills and are given food rations. "I used to repair airplanes," says Sara (not her real name), an ex-engineer who's studying to be a midwife and, as a trainee, receives wheat rations instead of pay.

No matter how the Taliban try to keep people focused on things godly, traces of temptation still surface. Bazaars sell secondhand blue jeans and T shirts—garb that all but guarantees a whipping if worn outdoors. The Foreign Ministry's press secre-

tary rhapsodizes in flawless Italian about the days when he studied archeology and sat in Roman cafés. The ministry's deputy director of U.N. affairs wants to talk about the glories of Las Vegas—"an amazing place," he says, "but I lost \$10 in the machines at Caesars Palace." A portly civil servant with a Berkeley degree hopes that "perhaps we can meet again soon, when we can all breathe." Maybe when the Taliban's war in the north ends, Afghan women will win back that basic right.

Helping Afghanistan

The United States had a hand in this disaster. Now it must work to resolve it. BY BARNETT R. RUBIN

JUST OUTSIDE LASH-kargah, a town in southwest Afghanistan, stands a great brick arch overlooking the remains of a city that flourished before Genghis Khan. Driving to the monument over a rutted desert track, it is not always obvious what was destroyed by Soviet bombs, what by infighting among former anti-Soviet guerrillas and what by the Mongol hordes.

It is almost impossible to convey the extremity of Afghanistan's ongoing destruction. Blame for this disaster lies with foreign powers around the globe: a country that can no longer produce even a bar of soap has been flooded with sophisticated weapons by outsiders struggling for power and wealth. The only real solution is for the world to reverse the catastrophe it has caused.

It all started with the cold war. The Soviets invaded to prop up a failing communist regime. With little thought for the consequences, the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan responded by funding the Islamic resistance (the mujahedin) in the largest covert operation in history.

When the Soviet Union dissolved, the Afghan regime it had propped up crumbled.



Burdened with history: A family in the Logar province

The mujahedin and remnants of the Army turned into feuding warlords and ethnic militias. While the Soviets had devastated villages that sheltered mujahedin, the victors made ruins of Kabul, the national capital.

New strategic stakes emerged: access to the oil and natural gas of the newly independent, landlocked states of Central Asia. Would Russia control new pipelines, as it had the old, or would new routes open? And if new routes went south, would they go through Iran, the object of United States sanctions, or to Pakistan via Afghanistan?

Pakistan saw its future in imposing a friendly—or sub-

servient—government in Afghanistan and linking its economy to Central Asia via pipelines and roads through Afghanistan. Iran, however, was determined to break the U.S. embargo by blocking pipeline routes that did not cross Iran. When Pakistan's former Afghan allies failed to gain power, it found a new one, the Taliban. Some in the U.S. government, too, hoped the ultraconservative Taliban would unify the country and guard the pipeline route.

With Pakistani aid, the Taliban captured the capital and two thirds of the country's territory. The remainder, which contains nearly half the country's population, is controlled

by various armed factions drawn from other ethnic groups. Iran supplies them, as do Russia and Central Asian states, fearful of the Taliban's approach to their borders.

The Taliban have outraged much of the world by banning women from schools, jobs and hospitals. And while international agencies struggle to help Afghans and respect basic principles in Taliban areas, they have fled most of the rest of the country after repeated looting by undisciplined fighters.

Despair about Afghanistan may be intellectually respectable, but the world cannot walk away from a civil war in a region with new nuclear powers, one that borders on the world's major sources of energy. The United States has a special responsibility: it paid for many of the weapons that have destroyed Afghanistan.

After decades of war and division, Afghanistan cannot be reassembled in a day. Before Afghans can reach agreement, their neighbors must stop fueling the battle. And as long as is possible, the United Nations and others must stay engaged with the Afghans, helping them survive and build grass-roots institutions that will outlive the war. In their different ways, both the Taliban and their opponents make this task formidable. But the Afghan people, who suffered as much as anyone to end the cold war, have not had an easy time either.

RUBIN, director of the Center for Preventive Action at the Council on Foreign Relations, was in Afghanistan in June.

Afghanistan Needs U.S. Intervention

the Wall Street Journal

By NANCY DEWOLF SMITH

Overnight it seems, Osama bin Laden has become the ultimate bad guy, eclipsing serial murderers like Carlos the Jackal and Abu Nidal, and pushing even "blind cleric" Omar Abdul Rahman off his perch to become everybody's most hated terrorist mastermind. That Mr. bin Laden is a dangerous man is clear, and he has been for so long that it is a mystery why U.S. President Clinton waited until this month to ban financial transactions with him. Now that Washington has tried to bomb the man suspected of orchestrating this month's attacks on its embassies, the fame factory is working overtime to satisfy a near-universal appetite for details of Mr. bin Laden's exploits and possible whereabouts.

The emerging chaos theory paints the Saudi fugitive as the harbinger of a whole new era of free-lance terrorism—one in which men and women driven by faith, not politics, and answerable to no government, will present a confounding challenge to the West. It all sounds very intimidating and it could initially benefit Mr. bin Laden by fanning a sense of helplessness among those who would oppose him. But how accurate is it?

In truth, Mr. bin Laden is very much the product of state policies. Unless we accept that the behavior of states helped make his awful agenda possible, and adopt strategies to change that behavior, no short-term fixes can be effective.

Unwilling Incubator

The place to start is Afghanistan, once the unwilling incubator for Mr. bin Laden and his gang and now their nest. This poor but proud old country is the scene of one of the biggest proxy wars of our time. Almost every state player involved—particularly Russia, Iran, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia—has had an active interest in keeping Afghanistan's turmoil going. Unless the U.S. re-enters the scene to call the game off, by this time next year it may be too late. In a worst-case scenario, people like Mr. bin Laden could be within reach of Pakistan's nuclear weapons.

The Soviets fired the opening shot with their invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Moscow's line today is that peace-loving Russia and its Central Asian neighbors are now under threat of invasion by Afghan "fundamentalists." The truth is that Russia never really left the Afghan scene after its army withdrew in 1989, and its policies since then have actually helped create the threat Moscow claims to fear so much.

When the Afghan resistance entered Kabul in 1992 and overthrew the Soviet-backed regime, Moscow initially aided a communist militia trying to win influence in the new regime. When the dust settled, Russia was providing money, guns and tactical advice to a new Afghan government dominated by members of a pan-Islamist resistance party. This alarmed Pakistan and the U.S., which were unhappy to see the Russians keeping their foothold, and through Afghan elements with radical tendencies. There was also concern about drug trafficking toward Moscow and about the Kabul government's penchant for issuing false passports to Tajik nationals at the request of Iran.

The answer, it seemed at first, might be the Afghan Taliban. Their name refers to religious students, but most were mem-

bers of Afghanistan's majority Pashtun tribe and chiefly concerned with rebuilding Afghanistan's traditional, nationalistic society, albeit with a more religious flavor. American officials liked the Taliban they met because they were not political radicals, were not anti-Western and showed no interest in the world outside Afghanistan.

By the time the Taliban took control of Kabul in 1996, however, the moderates among them had been pushed aside by stern fanatics, who proceeded to do all the things—like suppressing women—that have

3/8 This poor but proud country is the scene of one of the biggest proxy wars of our time.

made them such reviled figures. With only Pakistan and Saudi Arabia on their side, the Taliban started taking aid and money where they could get it—most famously from their former ideological and ethnic archenemy, the Arab Osama bin Laden.

A thousand decisions and competing national interests have kept the Afghan pot boiling. The Russians don't want their former vassal states in Central Asia to get strong enough to operate truly independently of Moscow. By fanning conflict in the region, Moscow got a pretext for keeping Russian soldiers and advisors in Tajikistan, and prevented Turkmenistan from selling its natural gas through a pipeline that bypassed Russia by going through



Afghanistan to Pakistan. Like Russia, Iran has also been supporting anti-Taliban Afghan forces as part of a larger strategy to make sure that Central Asian and Caspian resource pipelines don't bypass Moscow and Tehran's control.

Yet all is not as it seems. Moscow claims to be afraid of spreading Islamic fundamentalism, and has used this bogeyman to keep the Uzbek and Kazakh governments in line. But Turkmenistan, another Muslim Central Asian state, shows no fear of contamination and in fact enjoys good relations with the Taliban. And if Moscow is truly afraid of Islamic revolutionaries, why is Russia arming some of Afghanistan's most revolutionary Islamists in the so-called Northern Coalition against the Taliban?

And what is Saudi Arabia really up to in Afghanistan? The Saudis are backing the Taliban because the Taliban hate Iran. But how can the Saudis support a Taliban regime that is also hosting Mr. bin Laden, a sworn enemy of the House of

Saud? Perhaps the Saudi government has made a secret nonaggression pact with him. If so, Riyadh is in league with the No. 1 enemy of its U.S. allies. Washington's silence on this point, particularly now, is baffling.

That is only America's latest blunder. It long ago made the crucial error of enlisting foreign Muslims, chiefly Arabs like Mr. bin Laden, to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. Many Afghans protested against this intrusion. They also warned that Washington was training a legion that would ultimately turn its guns on the U.S. This is exactly what happened.

Washington's wartime favoritism toward more fanatical elements of the Afghan resistance has backfired, too. One of America's pet resistance commanders was a rabidly anti-American Islamist named Jalaluddin Haqqani. U.S. diplomats in Pakistan used to take visitors on pilgrimages to meet Mr. Haqqani just over the border from his headquarters in the Khost region of Afghanistan's Paktia province. If that area sounds familiar now, it is because the U.S. bombed it on Aug. 20, because Mr. Haqqani has been sharing his old facilities with his new friend Mr. bin Laden.

Things might have turned out very differently if the U.S. had remained a player on the Afghan scene. The best that can be said is that the Americans lost interest when the Cold War ended. The worst that can be said is that Washington effectively left the field to the Russians, especially after old Russia hand Strobe Talbott assumed the No. 2 job at the U.S. State Department. We saw some hint of that shift recently when a gullible New York Times reporter "broke" the years-old story of Russian military aid to Afghan anti-Taliban forces. Moscow denied it, as usual. It was much more revealing to see the State Department spring to Russia's defense, and heap all the blame for the continuing conflict on Pakistan.

Prophylactic Purity

How well such a strategy of disowning America's former ally paid off became apparent last Thursday, when Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced the coming end of secular law there, and a new rule of Islamic law based on the Koran. That's an obvious attempt to try to head off a crisis Pakistan initially created by upsetting Afghanistan's traditional, nonradical order, and that the U.S. made worse by cutting Pakistan off at the knees economically and diplomatically. It means that Pakistan is trying to ward off the spreading bin Laden effect by adopting Islamic purity as a prophylactic.

If that is true, Afghanistan's borders must be sealed now. The majority of Afghans never wanted their country to become a menace, and they are probably right when they say that if Afghans are left alone to make peace among themselves, people like Osama bin Laden will have to flee or die. But none of that can happen until the big players are pushed off the field. That is a job only Washington has the power and clout to undertake. If the U.S. fails in that responsibility, it will share the blame for what follows.

Ms. Smith is editorial page editor of The Asian Wall Street Journal.

Striking back: Risking a wider struggle with Islamic radicals, Clinton hits targets in Afghanistan and Sudan. U.S. intelligence is unusually strong, but will the attacks do any good? BY RUSSELL WATSON AND JOHN BARRY

‘Our Target Was Terror’

THEY CALLED IT OPERATION INFINITE Reach. To keep it a secret, the planning was done by a group of top officials so small that it code-named itself the Small Group—“SG,” to those few in the know. Membership was limited, in bureaucratic parlance, to “principals only.” Later, Defense Secretary William Cohen mused that he was the only person in his own office who knew about the operation. The planners knew what they were looking for thanks in part to intercepted telephone calls, and by early last Thursday the intended targets appeared to be right in Washington’s cross hairs. At 1:30 in the morning,

Bill Clinton called CIA Director George Tenet from Martha’s Vineyard to ask if “there was any new intel,” a source told NEWSWEEK. Tenet assured him nothing had changed. At 3 a.m., Clinton gave the order to go ahead.

Later, in the Arabian Sea, five U.S. warships—four surface vessels and a submarine—fired a barrage of 60 Tomahawk cruise missiles at suspected terrorist camps in Afghanistan. In the Red Sea, two other warships fired 20 cruise missiles at a pharmaceutical plant in Sudan that was thought

to be making an ingredient for the deadly VX nerve agent. The operation went off perfectly, the missiles slamming into their Afghan and Sudanese targets at almost the same moment. “Our target was terror,” Clinton declared on television, suddenly looking presidential again. He said the attacks were aimed at Osama bin Laden, the alleged mastermind of the U.S. Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. But questions remained. Were the cruise-missile attacks justified? And would they do any good in the war on terrorism?

Clinton said the United States had “convincing information” that Bin Laden was behind the embassy bombings and many other atrocities. He said there was “compelling evidence” that the Saudi-born multimillionaire’s terror network was planning further attacks on Americans. “You cannot overstate the imminence of what was about to happen,” a White House official told NEWSWEEK. A day after the bombardment the president’s national-security adviser, Sandy Berger, reported “moderate to heavy damage at each of the targets” and said the terror network’s operations had been significantly impaired.

But Bin Laden managed to be elsewhere in Afghanistan when his training camps were hit, despite Clinton’s claim that “a gathering of key terrorist leaders” was supposed to be taking place at one of the target sites. “By the grace of Allah, I am alive,” Bin Laden said in a radio message. His spokesman released a statement warning: “The battle has not started yet. Our answer will be deeds, not words.” Privately, administration officials acknowledged that another terrorist attack, somewhere in the world, was a near certainty. “The networks are out there,” said one official. “They can choose their own time and place.”

Just before the cruise-missile attacks, Bin Laden told a Pakistani journalist he had “nothing to do” with the U.S. Embassy

bombings in Africa. His host, Mullah Mohammad Omar, leader of Afghanistan's Taliban movement, insisted Bin Laden had clean hands. "There is no camp of Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan," he said. "We have already closed his camps." He added: "We can never hand over Osama to America." Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir said the U.S. attack was designed to overshadow the Monica Lewinsky scandal; he called Clinton "morally decrepit." Anti-American demonstrations in many Islamic countries echoed the same "Wag the Dog" theme; a Turkish newspaper headlined its story THE MONICA MISSILES.

But U.S. intelligence, and its helpers in other countries, had assembled an impressive dossier of evidence against Bin Laden. A key piece came from Muhammad Sadig Howaida, a 33-year-old Palestinian who was arrested by Pakistani officials on Aug. 7, the day of the embassy bombings, as he attempted to slip into Afghanistan on a fake passport. The details of Howaida's confession to the Pakistanis were obtained by NEWSWEEK's Zahid Hussain. His report:

"I did it all for the cause of Islam," Howaida said of the embassy bombings. He confessed to working for Bin Laden. "He is my leader, and I obey his orders," Howaida said. He told investigators he built a bomb for the embassy in Tanzania on orders from Ali Saleh, an Egyptian extremist long linked to Bin Laden.

Howaida (who has also used the surname Odeh) was born in the Saudi Arabian town of Tabuk to Palestinian parents. He was educated in Jordan, where he joined the Palestine Liberation Organization, and in the Philippines, where he made contact with radical Muslim groups. In 1990 he went to Afghanistan to help fight the Soviet invaders. There he met Bin Laden—and learned how to build bombs. In 1994, he said, Bin Laden sent him to join a terrorist network in Kenya. Howaida settled in a small town called Witu, married a Kenyan woman of Arab extraction and opened a furniture shop.

After his arrest in Karachi, Howaida initially refused to talk. Then he was handed over to the Army's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), in whose hands he finally broke down. He told ISI investigators that the leader of Bin Laden's group in Kenya was another Egyptian named Salah Abdullah. He said the attack on the embassy in Nairobi was organized by Ali Saleh and four other men: an Egyptian named Abdur Rehman, a man from the Comoros named Haroon and two Kenyans of Yemeni extraction named Fahd and Sheikh Bahamand. Howaida said his team in Tanzania includ-

In the Cross Hairs

Last Thursday, U.S. warships fired about 80 Tomahawk cruise missiles at facilities linked to Osama bin Laden, the alleged mastermind behind the Aug. 7 embassy bombings in East Africa. The retaliation was aimed at a paramilitary camp in Afghanistan and a pharmaceutical plant in north Khartoum, Sudan.

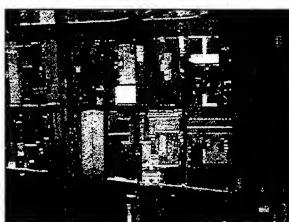
THE TOMAHAWK III MISSILE

The Tomahawk is a U.S. Navy favorite when it comes to land attacks. Why? Fired from a submarine or surface ship, it can avoid radar detection and thus hide the location from which the missile was launched.



Length: 20 ft. 6 in.
Diameter: 1 ft. 8.4 in.
Wingspan: 5 ft. 9 in.
Range: 1,000 miles
Cruise alt.: 50-100 ft.
Speed: 581-591 mph
Guidance system: Satellite-based GPS
Cost: \$1 million (approx.)

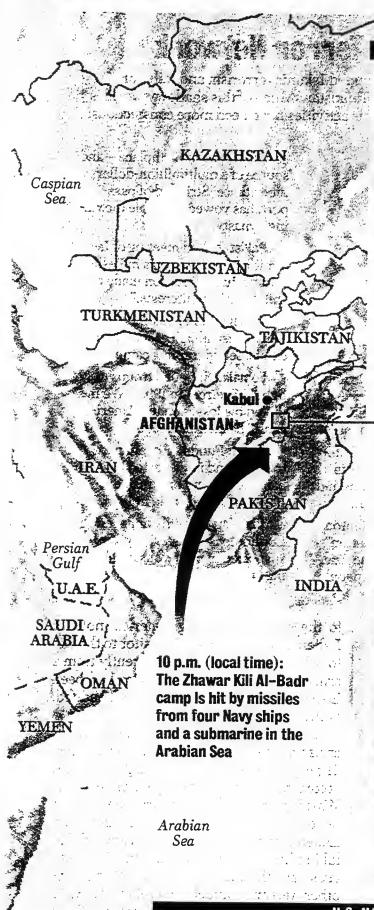
THE SUDAN ATTACK



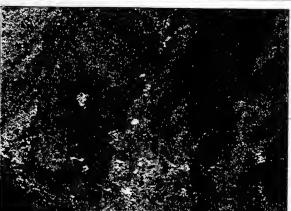
Aerial photo of the Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant in north Khartoum. A nearby candy factory was damaged, too.

7:30 p.m. (local time):
15-20 missiles, fired
from two ships, land on a
pharmaceutical plant.
U.S. officials say it makes
pervitin, sex ingredients.

Aug. 7: Two bombs
explode simultaneously
outside two U.S. embassies, killing 262
people, including 12 Americans.



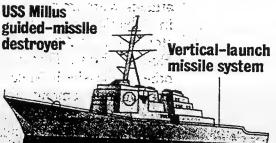
THE AFGHANISTAN ATTACK



U.S. NAVAL POWER

The military hasn't detailed the ships used in the attacks, but seven warships—cruisers, destroyers and a submarine—were in striking distance. Like the *Millus*, they may have fired missiles.

USS *Millus*
guided-missile
destroyer



Destroyers: USS *Millus*, USS *Elliot*, USS *Briscoe*, USS *Hayler*
Cruisers: USS *Shiloh*, USS *Cowpens*, USS *Valley Forge**
Sub: USS *Columbia*
Carrier: USS *Abraham Lincoln**

*NO CRUISE MISSILES

SOURCES: BATTISON SYSTEMS COMPANY, "COMBAT FLEETS OF THE WORLD"; U.S. NAVY, NAVY OFFICE OF INFORMATION, USNI, MILITARY ANALYSTIC RESEARCH, AND BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION; ILLUSTRATIONS BY STANFORD KAY AND SILVIO DA SILVA—NEWSWEEK

ed three other men: an Egyptian named Mustafa and two Tanzanians of Omani origin named Ahmad Khalfan and Abdullah Ahmed. The bombs were actually driven to the embassies by locally hired Tanzanians and Kenyans, he said. And all of the plotters except Saleh and Haroon were told to get out of town by Aug. 7.

The investigation of the bombings was moving far more rapidly than such things usually do. In a meeting of the Small Group on Aug. 12, Clinton had set a tough standard of proof. He didn't demand evidence that could be presented in a court of law; the need to protect sources and methods would almost certainly preclude anything like that. What Clinton said he needed, before he could authorize military action, was evidence that Berger and other members of the Small Group (including Cohen, a Republican, and Gen. Hugh Shelton, the hard-nosed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff) would regard as conclusive. Howaida's confession was one building block. At almost the same time, sources said, U.S. intelligence came up with another: an intercepted mobile-phone conversation between two of Bin Laden's henchmen that clearly implicated them in the embassy bombings.

The pharmaceutical plant in Sudan, known as El Shifa, was a late addition to the U.S. target list. The factory's lawyer said it had no connection to Bin Laden. And Sudanese officials insisted the plant made innocent medicines for both humans and animals. But sources said that when U.S. intelligence obtained samples of products made by El Shifa, one of them turned out to be a "precursor" to the VX nerve agent. It was "barely a step away from VX itself," said a U.S. official. Another source identified the substance as "an ethyl-methyl-phosphorus compound unique to VX," adding: "There's no way in hell you'd ever use that in pharmaceutical manufacturing." Senior U.S. officials also assert that Bin Laden has been talking about using chemical weapons against U.S. targets.

The intelligence breakthrough on El Shifa also benefited from the defection, around the first of the year, of Bin Laden's top money manager, Muhammad bin Moisalih. Sources said the Saudi government lured him away from Bin Laden with a large sum of money. Since then Moisalih has provided what one expert describes as "priceless" information on Bin Laden's tangled and mysterious finances. That included companies in which he had invested money, one of which was El Shifa. Last week Clinton signed an executive order barring U.S.



Moments after the U.S. Embassy bombing in Nairobi

companies or individuals from doing business with any concern linked to Bin Laden. Most of his financial connections are Islamic, and a senior U.S. Treasury official concedes the freeze is partly symbolic.

After the embassy bombings on Aug. 7, Clinton authorized his national-security team to explore the military options for retaliation. From then on, Berger deliberately worked outside the usual retinue of Clinton's political aides. "We all knew there would be cries of 'Wag the Dog,'" said one senior official. Even the president himself was insulated from the planning process until a meeting on Aug. 12, when Shelton ran through the options he had considered and discarded: an attack by ground troops and raids by manned aircraft. Clinton concurred in the choice of cruise missiles—less painful, both militarily and diplomatically.

Clinton approved the strike plan in principle on Aug. 14, three days before his grand-jury testimony on the Lewinsky matter. The Zhawar Kili complex in Afghanistan was chosen because of intelligence reports that top Bin Laden lieu-

tenants, including some coming in from Pakistan, planned to meet there last Thursday. But Bin Laden's own whereabouts weren't known. "Truth was, we didn't know who was in the camps," said one official who was in on the planning. Over that weekend, the Sudanese factory was added to the list. Clinton had concerns about both targets. He had to be reassured that the attack on the factory wouldn't spread a plume of poison gas over Khartoum. Planners decided that burning the plant to the ground would incinerate any toxic materials; extra cruise missiles were added to the mission to ensure total destruction. The president also stipulated that if the Zhawar meeting was canceled or postponed, there might be other, better targets to hit in Afghanistan. When nothing had changed in the intelligence picture by 3 a.m. Thursday, he gave the green light.

The results were mixed. The plant in Khartoum was razed, along with a candy factory nearby. Casualties were mercifully light: about 10 injuries and possibly one death. Angry Sudanese demonstrators took

to the streets—blaming America, not Bin Laden. Amid the rubble, a visitor to the factory found a metal label, apparently from a cruise missile. It said the device had been inspected in 1993 by "Tammie" and added: MADE IN THE U.S.A., WITH PRIDE.

A U.S. spy satellite spotted the flashes as cruise missiles exploded at Zhawar. At least 21 people were killed in the Afghan camps, according to the Taliban government, but Washington could not confirm the number or identity of the casualties. Although Bin Laden survived, Cohen said afterward that killing him was "not our design." U.S. officials said the raids may have deterred another terrorist attack. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told reporters: "It is very likely something would have happened had we not done this."

Something grim could still happen. American officials said that before the raids, attacks were imminent on U.S. embassies in Albania and Pakistan. "We think we stopped one in Albania," said a senior White House official. Threats were reported to other embassies in Malaysia, Yemen, Egypt, and Uganda, among others, and new pre-

Bin Laden's Terror Network

Osama bin Laden has funded Islamic terrorism and militant groups from Algeria to Tajikistan. Much of this shadowy world is a mystery, but some of his activities have been more conspicuous:



1 Sudan: Expelled in 1996 under U.S. pressure. May still own numerous businesses there, including share of drug plant.

2 Afghanistan: Fought in 1980s backed war against Soviets; set up training camps and helps bankroll the Taliban.

3 Kenya and Tanzania: Clinton cited "convincing information" that Bin Laden plotted the Aug. 7 bombings that killed 263 people.

4 Saudi Arabia: Birthplace—and source of a multimillion-dollar inheritance. Stripped of passport, has vowed to topple the ruling dynasty.

5 Pakistan: Led meeting of Islamic extremist groups in Peshawar in June. Decision made to "hit American interests."

6 Yemen: Father's homeland. Son formed alliances with tribal chiefs, set up training camps.

7 Somalia: Supplied troops to fight U.S. forces in 1993. "We inflicted big losses on the Americans," he later boasted.

8 Egypt: Funded Egyptian extremists and is suspected of backing attempt on President Hosni Mubarak's life in 1995.

9 Britain: Allegedly financed London-based Algerian group suspected of numerous bombings in France.

cautions were taken everywhere overseas, as they were back in the United States.

Outside the administration, some experts doubted the official rationale. "The timing was a little suspect," said Vince Cannistraro, a former CIA expert on counterterrorism. "If an operation were imminent, it's pretty clear that the resources would already be on the ground." He concluded that the cruise-missile strikes "did very little to hurt Bin Laden and probably initiated a new round of violence." The surest way to stop the violence is to kill the terrorists who perpetrate it, but that is hard to do at long range. "A cruise missile isn't an instrument of assassination," said Richard Murphy, a former assistant secretary of State and an expert on the Arab world. "Smart bombs are never quite as smart as you think."

Last week's attacks aroused anger

against the United States across the Muslim world, though Clinton insisted in his TV speech that the cruise-missile strikes "were not aimed against Islam." Only a few Muslims support the random violence advocated by Bin Laden and his ilk. But many share a sense that Muslims are under attack by the United States, which supports Israel, maintains military forces on the holy soil of Saudi Arabia and seems more willing to bomb or boycott Islamic wrongdoers than those of other religions. The radicals hope to capitalize on this anger. "This is a holy war," says Adel Abdel Bary, an opposition Egyptian lawyer now exiled to Britain who has ties to some of the militant Islamic groups. "We are poor. We are weak now. But we are not stupid. We can use any technology. We can do anything." He also maintains: "Americans can destroy a Hi-

roshima or a Nagasaki, but they cannot fight this kind of fight."

"I think it's important for the American people to understand that we are involved in a long-term struggle," Albright said last week. "This is, unfortunately, the war of the future." It will be a messy war, with potentially a great many casualties. Americans don't like close, bloody conflict, understandably preferring the safe standoff warfare that can be waged with cruise missiles. But it won't be long before some terrorists gain access (if they haven't already) to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. The war of the future is one Americans will have to learn how to win.

With GREGORY L. VISTICA and MICHAEL HIRSCH
in Washington, CHRISTOPHER DICKEY in Paris,
MARK DENNIS in Khartoum,
STEVE LEVINE
in Peshawar, GREGORY BEALS in New York
and bureau reports

The home front: The threat of terrorism is real. But the country is far from defenseless. BY TOM MASLAND

America Goes on Guard

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE need to know ... we will be targeted," declared national-security adviser Sandy Berger last week. But cops across the land already were on war footing. In Washington, armored SWAT teams stood outside the Pentagon. Sport utility vehicles parked nose-to-nose blocked the main driveway at the State Department and U.S. Park Police laid on extra patrols at national memorials. In New York, barriers went up around city hall. Bomb-sniffing dogs prowl major airports as tow trucks mercilessly whisked away unattended cars. U.S. Border Patrol agents went on high alert, and military police randomly checked soldiers' IDs under a defense plan called Threat Con Alpha.

Although experts agree that Americans abroad are more at risk after last week's strikes, ordinary folks wonder just how jittery they should be. A CNN poll found 10 percent of those questioned "very worried" about a terrorist attack. When war-



Security team mans an entrance to the Pentagon

planes buzzed the Loop last week in the annual prelude to the Chicago Air and Water Show, a radio talk show's phone lines lit up. "I'm surprised at how afraid they are," said the host, Roe Conn of WLS. "We've always been told it's just a matter of time, and people are really taking that to heart."

But America is far from defenseless against Osama bin

Laden and his ilk. The battle has been raging secretly for years, and the FBI's record in containing Mideast terrorism is the envy of Western law-enforcement agencies. The first successful attack was the World Trade Center bombing in 1993, two decades after Europe first confronted Mideast-related hijackings and bombings. Even then, a subsequent conspiracy trial revealed that

the FBI had penetrated the circle of radical Muslim cleric Omar Abdel Rahman. A close associate of Bin Laden is reported to be cooperating with investigators in New York. In a new move that troubles civil libertarians, immigration officials are trying to deport several Arabs on the basis of secret intelligence. The FBI's unclassified budget for counterterrorism has risen from \$80 million in 1994 to nearly \$400 million last year; the agency has joint terrorism task forces with 16 police departments.

More preparations are needed. Quietly, local police and public-health agencies have been grappling with the possibility of "grand terrorism"—chemical, biological or even nuclear attacks. Chicago, is spending \$450,000 on specialized training and decontamination equipment to use during such emergencies, its part of a congressional grant to 120 municipalities after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing carried out by homegrown terrorists. "I think our citizens would be comfortable with what we've been doing, but we just can't talk about it," said Chief Francis Moriarty of the department's emergency preparedness program. The threat of terrorism is real, but America's guardians aren't napping.

With bureau reports

A S I A

GUEST OF HC



Pakistan seizes a suspect in the U.S. embassy bombings, but his conflicting tales point to a bigger fish: a shadowy financier in Afghanistan

By TIM McGIRK ISLAMABAD

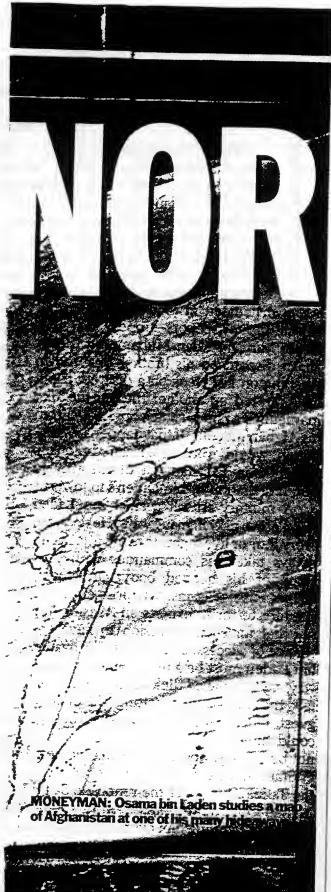
THE PAKISTANI IMMIGRATION OFFICER in Karachi waved forward the next passenger who had just landed on flight PK 746 from Nairobi, a sharp-faced, reedy man with Yemeni travel documents. Ordinarily, the officer would have stamped the man's passport without a second glance; it was 5:45 a.m., and the line of tired travelers was getting restless. But as the officer explained later, "This man was acting too jittery."

Warily, he examined the photo in the passport, then peered into the man's face. The difference between the two was almost laughable: the thin, clean-shaven man in front of him bore no resemblance to the passport picture of a bearded fat man.

Forged passports are a common occurrence at Karachi airport, a frequent transit point for drug smugglers. Sometimes, travelers caught with fake passports in Karachi manage to bribe their way free, but this man didn't get the chance. As immigration officers led him to a side room, he was waylaid by agents of the Pakistani Intelli-

gence Bureau. Several hours later came news from Nairobi and Dar es Salaam: two bombs had exploded almost simultaneously outside U.S. embassies, killing 257 people and injuring 5,500. The agents realized their fake Yemeni might be more than a mere drug runner. The interrogation shifted in direction and ferocity. According to the Karachi daily *Ummat*, the suspect was grilled for three days before he confessed his real identity: Mohammed Saddiq Odeh, a Palestinian.

Most crucially, Saddiq allegedly admitted that he, along with other Islamist co-conspirators, was one of the Nairobi bombers. A trained engineer living in Kenya, Saddiq, 34, said he provided technical and logistical back-up for the bomb teams, according to Pakistani intelligence officials. He also told his inquisitors that



MONEYMAN: Osama bin Laden studies a map of Afghanistan at one of his many bases.

the blasts in East Africa had been organized by the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation's prime suspect: Osama bin Laden, the fugitive Saudi millionaire who is said to be bankrolling an Islamic war against America, Israel and the Saudi royal family, which he deems to be corrupt. Pakistani officials say Saddiq and possibly six other participants in the Nairobi bombings were on their way to meet bin Laden at his lair in Afghanistan when the Palestinian was apprehended in Karachi. "Osama takes care of his men like a father," Saddiq reportedly told his Pakistani interrogators.

This was the break FBI agents had been waiting for. But once he was flown back to Nairobi on Aug. 14, Saddiq denied involvement in the bombing and did not implicate anyone else, FBI and Kenyan

officials said. Had the Pakistanis tortured him into a confession? Some U.S. law enforcement officials quoted in Washington seemed to think so, and these allegations angered the Pakistanis. Though Saddiq changed his story, U.S. officials began following up on what they knew of his supposed statements in Pakistan. FBI agents and Kenyan police, apparently acting on a tip-off from Saddiq, raided a Nairobi hotel and carted off several boxes of evidence. A local newspaper reported that four foreigners had checked into the hotel on Aug. 3 and left hours before the Aug. 7 bombing. They reportedly assembled the bomb under Odeh's guidance and drove it to the embassy. In Pakistan, meanwhile, a Saudi and a Sudanese were captured trying to slip across the Afghan border without passports. The pair were being questioned about any links to bin Laden.

Still, there's no solid proof yet that links the financier, who is the scion of a Saudi construction family, to these bombings. And for now he's safe moving around his half-dozen bases in Afghanistan. That's because the Islamic Taliban militia, which now rules most of that wild country, follow a simple code of the Pathan warriors: if someone knocks at your door, even your own worst enemy or a murderer, it's your duty to give him sanctuary from his pursuers. This code is always invoked by the Taliban when asked to explain why shelter is given to bin Laden.

In a telephone interview from Kandahar, Mullah Mohammed Omar, the one-eyed village cleric who founded the Islamic Taliban movement four years ago, told TIME: "Osama bin Laden is a guest and a refugee in Afghanistan. I don't think he's behind these bomb explosions in distant Africa." He added: "I feel some people are wanting any excuse to blame Taliban and bin Laden for these things."

As a guest, bin Laden is doing his best not to wear out his welcome. Diplomats in Islamabad, who are monitoring the Saudi's movements in Afghanistan, say that bin Laden, both on his own and as a conduit for other wealthy Islamic zealots in the Gulf, provides millions of dollars for the Taliban's attempted conquest of all Afghanistan. He finances hundreds of Koranic schools, both in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where his fiery, anti-American views have a following. His supporters also claim that he and his own army of 300 Arab and Sudanese commandos joined in a recent Taliban assault at Bagram airbase, north of Kabul. In

other words, bin Laden is a houseguest the Taliban like having around.

So far, Mullah Omar is resisting pressure from the Saudi and Pakistani governments to hand over bin Laden. Four weeks ago, the Saudi intelligence chief, Prince Turki al Faisal, flew to Kandahar and met with Taliban leaders. Soon after the prince's visit, the Taliban militia took delivery of more than 400 new pick-up trucks, flown to Kandahar still bearing their Dubai license plates. The Taliban also had the cash to begin their checkbook conquest of the northern region around the stronghold of Mazar-e-Sharif, buying up enemy commanders.

Over the summer, bin Laden had become more vocal in his private holy war against

"If any government tries to hand him over to the U.S., all good Muslims will overthrow it."

the U.S. In a March press statement, bin Laden threatened to attack U.S. installations and citizens. A group he founded issued a new threat last week to "continue shipping more American dead bodies to their unjust government." Just how much force the Saudi prince was willing to apply on the Taliban is unclear: a personal friendship between

Turki al Faisal and bin Laden was forged in the early days of the Afghan war against the Soviets, and some diplomats claim that bin Laden—who lately has tempered his anti-Riyadh rhetoric some—may be furthering Saudi wishes to help the Taliban thwart Iran's designs in Central Asia. His revolutionary activities haven't stopped Saudi royalty from hiring the other, more business-minded members of the bin Laden family to build several new palaces, according to Saudi construction sources.

After the Saudi intelligence chief's visit, Mullah Omar met with bin Laden. Usually, the reclusive Taliban leader never leaves his simple but well-guarded compound. (Visitors to Kandahar say that Mullah Omar's house was built by bin Laden.) The Taliban leader reproached him mildly. "We told him that as a guest, he shouldn't involve himself in any activities that create problems for us," adds Mullah Omar. "And we already have plenty of problems on our own." Bin Laden allegedly offered to leave Afghanistan for "another mountainous area" (presumably Yemen, where he has influential tribal friends), but the Taliban told him this was not necessary. After all, they had their Pathan code to uphold. "I can assure anyone that Osama is not involved in these bombings," Mullah Omar says defensively.

Really? According to Islamabad diplomats and visitors to bin Laden's various



GOD AND GUN: A member of the Islamic Taliban militia patrols the frontline near Kabul amid reports the group may again lose Mazar-e-Sharif, the one Afghan city it has never truly controlled

hides out in Afghanistan, he certainly has the tools to orchestrate such attacks. They say he's in constant touch by satellite telephone and fax with his agents in London, Peshawar, Geneva, the Gulf countries and Sudan. His advisers also have easy access to and from Afghanistan from airports in Jalalabad and Kandahar. Bin Laden maintains tightly defended camps in Loggar and Nangarhar, mountainous regions near the Pakistan border. He keeps another safe house in Kandahar and two more in Jalalabad—including his favorite haunt, which he has named "Star of the Jihad." He also helps run an Islamic training camp, Al-Badr, in the mountains near Khost, where Algerians, Egyptians, Sudanese, Pakistanis and Kashmiris are schooled in commando

techniques—including a course in explosives—as well as in Islamic dogma.

A brilliant organizer with a background in engineering and economics, bin Laden has teamed up with other Islamists. In May, one visitor who encountered bin Laden, a soft-spoken and frail man who walks with a cane, claims the Saudi was accompanied by Ayman al-Zawahiri, head of the banned Islamic Jihad group in Egypt, along with two sons of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, the blind Egyptian preacher now in a U.S. jail for his role in the World Trade Center bombing. Together, al-Zawahiri and bin Laden formed a front, whose goals are identical to those of the previously unknown Liberation Army of the Islamic Shrines, which claimed credit for the two bombings in Africa.

Other U.S. embassies may fall in the sights of Islamic militants. Citing "serious indications of a threat to U.S. facilities and citizens," the State Department on Tuesday evacuated more than 200 "non-emergency" personnel and family members from Islamabad and urged foreigners working for non-Muslim relief agencies to evacuate. Pakistani officials said they were unaware of any specific threat to Americans and claimed that information on a possible attack originated in Washington. Several Pakistani newspapers—tipped off that Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif dispatched his brother Shabbaz to Washington last week on a discreet trip—have offered up another theory: the U.S. may launch a raid to snatch bin Laden from his Afghan hideout. If that happens, Washington would want American diplomats stationed in Pakistan out of the way to avoid retaliation by bin Laden's followers.

A military assault against bin Laden could prove risky in many ways. He decamps every four or five nights to avoid attack and always takes his commandos with him. Some of his hooded bodyguards carry Stinger missiles against a surprise air attack. Counter-terrorist experts in Washington say that for such a mission to have any chance of success, a military strike against bin Laden must be a major one. An easier way, say Islamabad diplomats, might be to talk the Taliban into getting rid of their guest. Once bin Laden is flushed out, he could then be arrested—though that may not be so easy. Reacting to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's request that the Taliban turn over the renegade Saudi, Mullah Omar told TIME, "Nothing doing. We're not handing him over."

In the U.S., bin Laden may be considered a super-villain, spinning his global web of terror, but many Muslims admire him as an Islamic hero. An Islamabad clergyman who visited bin Laden remarked: "He's a true revolutionary. If any government tries to hand him over to the Americans, all good Muslims will rise and overthrow it."

Such of warnings are taken seriously in Islamabad. According to the daily *News*, Nawaz Sharif was told in a security briefing that his government's involvement in a strike against bin Laden might set off religious unrest inside Pakistan. As much as Nawaz Sharif may want to help the U.S. track down the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam bombers, few Pakistani officials can forget that there's another commandment to the Pathan warrior code upheld by Taliban supporters: if someone mistreats your houseguest, it's your duty to take revenge. —With reporting by Syed Talat Husain/ Islamabad, Ghulam Hasnain/Karachi, Rahimullah Yusufzai/Peshawar, Elaine Shannon and Douglas Waller/Washington

Engelsk press

Afghanistan and Pakistan

End of the road for the Taliban?

PESHAWAR, PAKISTAN

The Islamic zealots who have conquered much of Afghanistan face stalemate

THE success of the Taliban army in Afghanistan has owed much to Pakistan's support. In return, Pakistan believed that a country united under the Taliban would be happy to co-operate with its benefactor. But things are not turning out that way. For one thing, the Taliban do not rule the whole of Afghanistan and, in Pakistan's view, are unlikely to. Since the Taliban fighters emerged in 1994 they have been immensely successful, and now control about two-thirds of Afghanistan, including the capital, Kabul. But the northern third, ethnically different from the Taliban's followers, and deeply opposed to their strict interpretation of Islamic law, remains strong.

The Pakistan army, working through its Inter-Services Intelligence branch (isi), and supported by the interior ministry and rich merchants, believed that the arms and training it freely gave to the Taliban was an investment for the future. Pakistan is a small country in military terms. A pliant Afghanistan would, the army reckoned, provide the strategic depth it needed should it ever have to fight India. Yet the Taliban have never been the puppets of the isi that many suppose them to be. Their increasing disregard of their mentors has weakened the isi's clout with Pakistan's policymakers. Should the government heed the army's plea for nuclear weapons, the resulting strategy—mutually assured destruction, or MAD, as it was cryptically known during the cold war—would weaken the case somewhat for strategic depth and confound the army's ra-

tionale for backing the Taliban.

For Pakistan's civilian politicians, moreover, the Taliban, for all the ground they have taken, have been a disappointment. They have failed to force open the principal road to Central Asia; they have not delivered on a promise to eliminate opium production; and they appear to have a dismal regard for human rights. Far from encouraging trade, their firebrand

territory for the Taliban and racked with un-Islamic corruption, is top of their list. Their spiritual home lies in religious schools run by the Jamiat e Ulema e Islam (jui), an Islamic party that has repudiated democratic elections and has called for Islamic revolution in Pakistan. The government fears these zealous and battle-trained youths could pose a mortal threat to Pakistan's democracy.

The army, including the isi, still favours the Taliban. So, for now, does the foreign ministry, headed by a former isi officer whose anti-Taliban deputy may soon displace him. But the prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, unlike his predecessor Benazir Bhutto, has few close ties to the Taliban. The educated civilian elite tend to abhor them. They and the interior ministry, fearful of domestic instability, want to distance themselves from the Taliban. The signs are that they will win.

One favoured option is to give support to the Pashtuns, the traditional rulers of Afghanistan, with the aim of marginalising the Taliban to a purely religious role. A Pashtun-led political organisation would, it is hoped, forge a settlement with the northern alliance of Burhanuddin Rabbani. In January, to the chagrin of the Taliban, Mr Rabbani visited Mr Sharif and met Pashtun politicians. Since then, Pakistan has flown aid to earthquake victims in areas under Mr Rabbani's control. Peace is again being talked about. In April, after a visit to Afghanistan by Bill Richardson, a senior American official, representatives of the warring groups met in Islamabad, the Pakistani capital. Meanwhile, Pakistan has set up a new anti-terrorist department and plans to regulate religious schools.

The Taliban are wrestling with problems of their own. Historical tribal enmities lurk close to the surface. Shortages of experienced leaders have been made up by relying on some former communists and guerrillas, diluting the movement's theological purity. Yet, the Taliban should not be discounted. They still

have powerful connections in Pakistan and, more importantly, popular support at home. These could sustain the Taliban through several crises. They have achieved the improbable feat of disarming tribesmen in a society where guns are considered indispensable emblems of manhood. Their rule is widely praised—if only by men—for bringing peace and stability to previously lawless areas. But they must be aware that erstwhile friends have repeatedly toppled intransigent Afghan rulers.



An ideological warrior

style of Islam has terrified Central Asian governments, who now blame Pakistan for supporting them.

Worse, the Taliban pose a possible, though previously unforeseen, threat to Pakistan's own security. Most Taliban fighters grew up in refugee camps in Pakistan. Thousands of others are Pakistani nationals. As the prospect for sweeping victories in Afghanistan recedes and administrative, rather than military, skills are sought, many veteran fighters have begun to look to new ideological battlefronts. Pakistan, familiar

Tetchy neighbours

Economy: 5+

TEHRAN

15/8-98

WESTERN countries used regularly to accuse Iran of exporting its radical brand of Islam. Now Iran finds itself watching helplessly as a hostile movement, preaching an even more radical brand of Islam, rapidly expands its control over Afghanistan. All the Iranians can do, as the Taliban advance, is to preach peace—and call in vain for some kind of power-sharing between the various Afghan factions.

This week the Taliban seized Mazar-Sharif and several smaller towns in northern Afghanistan, the last remaining stronghold of the opposition alliance that Iran supports. Underscoring their hostility, the Taliban stormed Iran's mission in Mazar-Sharif, taking ten diplomats and a journalist into custody. The militia also seized 35 Iranian lorries together with their drivers, accusing them of supplying the opposition forces with weapons. Iran claims they were delivering humanitarian aid.

Iran has nervously shunned the

Taliban ever since 1994, when they emerged from Koranic schools in refugee camps in Pakistan to burst upon the Afghan scene. Iran, a Farsi-speaking country ruled by Shia Muslim clergy, is fearful of the Taliban's determination to set up a purist Sunni Islamic state, returning Afghanistan to Pashtun rule after long dominance by Farsi-speaking, Iranian-aligned Tajiks.

Iran dismisses the Taliban as "puppets" invented by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and America to counter Iranian influence. And it fears for the bad image that the movement will give Islam. "A group of rigid-minded, brainless, violent and illogical people in Afghanistan are ruining Islam's reputation," lamented Iran's parliamentary speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq-Noori.

Although there is no proof of American support, the Taliban are linked with extremist Sunni groups in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and may well share their prejudice against Shias. Both countries deny backing the Taliban, but they are the only states, apart from the United Arab Emirates, to recognise Taliban rule. The world at large objects to the movement's repressive

polices, especially towards women.

Iran declares itself betrayed by Pakistan, traditionally its good friend, and its press has been targeting Islamabad. "The Iranian nation will no longer tolerate Pakistan's mischievous game. Islamabad does not deserve to be our friend," stormed the newspaper *Resalat*.

In fact, Iran and Pakistan have been quietly vying for influence in Afghanistan since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. There is much at stake, not least their economic interest in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia. Both countries are deeply involved in competing routes to provide the land-locked, energy-rich republics with access to the sea.

Pakistan is anxious to open a direct passage through Afghanistan, an attractive option for American companies which at present have to use more complicated and costlier routes in their zeal to bypass Iran. The Taliban have been negotiating with an American consortium and an Argentine company to construct a \$2 billion pipeline to carry Turkmenistan's gas through Afghanistan to Pakistan. The latest Afghan battles were fought within close range of the pipeline's planned entry point.

Economic gain or loss is not Iran's only concern. It fears that the Taliban could wage a bloody campaign against Afghanistan's Shias, whose leaders are members of the opposition alliance. According to Afghan dissidents in Iran, Taliban militiamen desecrated a Shia shrine in Mazar-Sharif. In addition, Iranian officials accuse the Taliban of assisting drug-trafficking into Iran, a transit route for Afghan drugs on their way to Europe.

A further worry for Iran is that the Taliban's advance has halted its efforts to repatriate the 2m or so Afghan refugees who, over the years, have found sanctuary in Iran. Repatriation was suspended three years ago, when the Taliban captured provinces near the Afghan-Iranian border.

Last week Iran increased its security along this troubled 1,000km (600-mile) frontier after renegade militiamen opened fire on two Iranian border posts. Iranian forces reportedly retaliated. "We will not tolerate any insecurity and instability. We will respond in force," thundered General Rahim Safavi, commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards.

THE TIMES FRIDAY AUGUST 14 1998

Saudi extremist built network of fanaticism

By MICHAEL DYNES

OSAMA BIN LADEN, the renegade Saudi multimillionaire thought to be behind the East African embassy bombings that killed 257 and injured 5,000, has created a new terrorist organisation with the support of Iranian and other Islamic extremists.

Evidence has emerged that the fanatical Saudi dissident, operating from his remote hideout in the Afghan mountains, has brought together a number of terror groups dedicated to the co-ordination of a jihad, or holy war, against America and Israel. Known as the World Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Americans, the organisation was created on February 15 after a meeting between Mr bin Laden, 45, and other Islamic extremists in an attempt to broaden their fight against Israel and the US, according to intelligence sources.

During the meeting, Mr bin Laden and a senior member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards agreed to combine their efforts to oppose the US, provide assistance to Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo, and train a new generation of Muslim extremists, according an article in the latest edition of Jane's *Foreign Report*.

The article is backed up by a brazen interview Mr bin Laden gave on May 28 to ABC, the US television network, in which he said that a "higher council" had been created to co-ordinate jihad against Israel. Mr bin Laden said his followers did not "differentiate between those dressed in military uniforms and civilians. They are all targets."

Mr bin Laden told ABC:



Bin Laden: at the top of US list of suspects

"We believe the biggest thieves in the world are Americans, and the biggest terrorists on earth are Americans." He added: "The only way for us to defend these assaults is by using similar means."

On June 12, the State Department issued a warning naming him as a potential

TERROR LINKS

terrorist threat, and tightened security arrangements at its diplomatic missions throughout the Middle East. The new security arrangements were not extended to Africa.

Like thousands of other young Muslims, Mr bin Laden left his native Saudi Arabia to join the holy war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, aged 19. But he never returned to help in the running of the family construction business, which is the source

of his estimated \$300 million (£184 million) personal fortune.

When the Soviet Union was finally pushed out of Afghanistan, Mr bin Laden moved to Sudan. But in the face of intense pressure from the US, he was expelled in 1994, and returned to Afghanistan's southern city of Kandahar with his three wives under the protection of the extremist Taliban regime. Two years later, he was stripped of his Saudi citizenship for his attacks on the Saudi royal family for allowing the "infidel" US troops to be stationed on Saudi soil — the site of Muslim sacred ground.

Mr bin Laden is reported to have 3,000 followers, who have fought on his instructions in Afghanistan, Somalia, Eritrea, Chechnya, Bosnia, Tajikistan and Yemen, backed up by a web of financial, logistical and strategic assistance to an assortment of Sunni Islamic groups.

Mr bin Laden has been cited by US intelligence as the prime suspect in two fatal bombings against American servicemen in Saudi Arabia, including the death of 19 airmen in Dhahran in 1996. He is also suspected of funding the explosion at New York's World Trade Centre in 1993.

Mr bin Laden's fighters are also thought to have been behind the shooting down of US helicopters in Somalia, killing 18 soldiers, in America's ill-fated Operation Restore Hope. US officials have confirmed that Mr bin Laden is "at the top of the list" of suspects because he is known to have an extensive terrorist network operating in Africa.

America's top suspect for the African bombings is a millionaire with a mission to attack America from his cave hideout, writes Marie Colvin

Sunday Times 16/8 - 98

Mountain cedars hide the mouth of the cave. Inside, in rooms hollowed into the rock face, computer screens glow, fax machines whirr, messages are sent via satellite telephone. This is where Osama Bin Laden, the Saudi multi-millionaire fundamentalist, conducts his holy war against the United States.

The cave, at the end of a narrow dirt road through a mountain range above the city of Jalalabad in eastern Afghanistan, is a nerve centre of state-of-the-art communications linking him to a network of Islamic fundamentalists that stretches across the Middle East, Asia, Europe, the United States and Africa. Western intelligence believes that he e-mailed instructions from here to his supporters on the timing of a 1995 car bombing in Riyadh that killed five Americans.

The State Department considers Bin Laden to be the prime suspect in the twin bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam nine days ago that killed 248 people, including 12 Americans, and wounded almost 5,000.

Israel takes its suspicions a large step further. It believes that he is using his contacts and great wealth to get his hands on what the West most fears: an "Islamic" nuclear bomb.

Laden is known to have three bases in Afghanistan, including two "showpiece" tent encampments in Kandahar and Logar to which western journalists are taken for security reasons. The "bat cave" is his real headquarters. It has been hollowed back into the rock face so that it extends

to three rooms. In Bin Laden's bedroom — where he sleeps with a Kalashnikov which he claims to have captured from a slain Soviet general — three uncomfortable beds with wool blankets and thin mattresses are pushed up against the raw shelving that holds a library of richly bound Islamic texts.

A second, smaller room contains his arsenal of Kalashnikov assault rifles, mortars and ammunition. The largest room has a desk and two laptop computers connected to the world by a satellite telephone.

Bin Laden, who inherited a fortune of \$200m-\$400m, is in touch not just with fellow fundamentalists but with western financiers as well. He directs an extensive stock portfolio and makes investments through front companies in construction and other legitimate businesses.

Bin Laden may preach a virulent anti-western line but his jihad seems to rely heavily on western technology.

His life appears to be spartan. He and his fighters eat meals of gritty bread, cheese and tea. A recent visitor found Bin Laden and his entourage sharing a dinner of four fried eggs between 12 people.

A generator supplies electricity, but Bin Laden always keeps a torch at hand in case of blackouts. The cave is warmed by a jerry-built system of hot water pipes.

Anti-aircraft guns are stationed on the slopes above the cave, which is guarded by a force of loyal fighters from around the Arab world — Saudis, Kuwaitis, Yemenis, Afghans — most of them veterans of the successful guerrilla war that drove the Russians out of Afghanistan. Firing off barrages of guns

and mortars at night, they told a visitor it was an exercise.

About a kilometre down the dirt road to Jalalabad is a checkpoint manned by fighters of the Taliban, the Islamic movement that controls most of Afghanistan. Bin Laden has never had a greater need for his ring of defence. American agents are hunting for him; so is Israeli intelligence.

The Americans are not yet pointing a formal finger of accusation. But Bin Laden combines a virulent hatred of the United States with vast wealth and a network of acolytes trained in terror techniques.

Earlier this year, Bin Laden issued a fatwa calling on Muslims around the world to fight to expel the Americans from

the holy land of Saudi Arabia, and eventually from the Islamic world. American intelligence believes he is implicated in at least three similar operations against American targets: the 1993 blast at the World Trade Centre in New York; a 1995 car bombing in Riyadh that killed five Americans; and the 1996 truck bomb that killed 19 American soldiers in the Khobar military barracks.

He makes little effort to hide his actions. "You should go through my track record," Bin Laden said by satellite telephone last week to a contact in Pakistan, who asked to remain anonymous. "I always kill Americans because they kill us. Look at al-Khobar, al-Riyadh and Mogadishu

[where, in 1993 a mob of Somalis killed 18 American soldiers; Bin Laden is believed to have helped to arm them]. When we attack Americans, we don't harm other people."

His statement seems to have been intended as a half-hearted denial of any role in the east Africa blasts. But western intelligence thinks otherwise. It is persuaded that he had a hand, at least, in the planning of the two attacks.

OSAMA BIN LADEN was one of 20 children of Mohamed Bin Laden, a self-made man who initially built walls for King Abdel Aziz, the founder of the Saudi dynasty, and went on — with the king's patronage — to construct the pilgrim cities of Mecca and Medina and about 80% of Saudi Arabia's roads as the country's oil wealth grew.

By the time Osama was born in 1957, his father was one of the wealthiest commoners in Saudi Arabia. When the old man crashed his private plane and was killed in the late 1970s, an elder son, Bakr, took over the company and Osama became a wealthy young man.

Although the family was religious, Osama was not remembered as particularly zealous until — studying economics and business administration at university — he met members of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Egyptian

group that advocated creating an Islamic society and rejecting western influence. Within days of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, the 22-year-old Osama left for Afghanistan to join the fight against the Russians. He took with him a team of construction workers and equipment and spent most of

the war building roads for the mujaheddin and constructing caves for ammunition dumps. The war was seen as a holy mission against the communists and his conservative relatives supported the cause.

According to an intelligence source who asked to remain anonymous, Bin Laden also had contact with the Central Intelligence Agency which was training, financing and attempting to direct the

volunteers from all over the Islamic world to join the jihad against the Russian invaders.

When the 10-year war ended, these veterans went home fired by a dangerous fusion of victory, virulent Islamic zeal, the best training in the world and an incipient hatred that turned against their American paymasters. They brought their expertise to some of the most violent anti-western groups in the Middle

East. The CIA calls it "blowback". Bin Laden has maintained close ties to the "Afghanis" throughout the Middle East.

Bin Laden moved to Sudan, where he helped the Islamic regime build a strategic road. His family disowned him and the Saudi government cancelled his passport. In 1996 Sudan came under pressure from the Americans to deport him and he returned to

Afghanistan, taking with him a coterie of loyal fighters and continued control over his fortune.

"He is not hiding his money in socks in a cave somewhere," said an intelligence analyst. "His money is working." He earns millions of pounds annually from his 53% stake in Sudan's export of a natural gum used in western food products. But investments are hard to trace because he works through front companies and rarely communicates directly.

Western intelligence believes Bin Laden is using the investments to fund a terrorist network that is unlike any seen before. He personifies the new face of what Harvey Kushner, a terrorism expert from Long Island University who was consulted by Washington on the embassy bombings, calls "transnational" terrorism, in which agents of numerous nationalities operate in shifting alliances all over the world. They are far

harder to track because, unlike the terrorists of the 1970s or 1980s, they have no fixed organisation or state sponsor.

A group planning an operation may use him as a sort of broker, asking for finance and for help in the logistics, or he may mastermind his own operation.

"These guys have no hierarchical structure, so you can't infiltrate them," Kushner said. "You could compare investigating these new millennium terrorist groups to trying to take a picture of a constellation of stars. Only in the case of these groups, by the time you develop the picture the constellation changes."

AS THE search-and-rescue teams wound down in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam last week, the focus shifted to the investigation.

Burnt-out cars and shreds of metal were gathered and meticulously laid out in a car park 80 yards from the Nairobi embassy, where teams of FBI agents pored over the debris.

Experts said they believed it most likely that Semtex had been used. Sheila Horan, the FBI agent in charge of the Nairobi investigation, refused to comment yesterday on the type of explosive that had been used. "We have returned potential evidence to FBI headquarters and that is going to give us a better indication, but under no circumstances would I make a statement that it was Semtex or any other explosive," she said.

America has bitter memories of attacks against its citizens around the world. It knows that finding and punishing the perpetrators is an extraordinarily difficult, sometimes impossible task.

If Bin Laden and his network were behind the bombings of the two embassies, they show that he has at his disposal teams of highly skilled, technically proficient and ruthless killers.

Although investigators have focused on him as the most likely suspect, however, they will not make the mistake of assuming his responsibility without concrete evidence.

Indeed, the spread of Islamic fundamentalism and the hatred of America for its support of Israel and "corrupting" influence on the Islamic world means the list of those who would like to mount such an attack is daunting.

Although Iran under Mohammad Khatami, its new and more pragmatic president, has shown signs of moderating its fierce antagonism to the "Great Satan", intelligence analysts do not rule out the possibility that a faction of radicals within the Tehran regime that opposes Khatami's rapprochement to the West could have been involved in the operation.

The radicals would know full well that any evidence of Iranian involvement in the explosions in east Africa would put paid to the hesitant warming of relations which they loathe.

In February, Bin Laden met Yehia Safawi, a senior member of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, at which the two are believed to have agreed to train Muslim extremists and possibly co-ordinate efforts, despite the antipathy between the Taliban and Iran.

A threat by the Islamic jihad in Egypt to attack American targets — issued because the United States was behind the arrest and deportation to Egypt of three Islamic jihad members who had gone to Albania to join the Kosovars

fighting Serbian forces — has been judged unlikely because it came only a week before the attacks. Such operations take months of planning.

Investigators remain suspicious, however, as the Egyptian Islamic jihad, which was responsible for the assassination of Anwar Sadat, the Egyptian president, is known to have close ties to Bin Laden. Now Bin Laden is suspected of paying £2m to an intermediary in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan as part of a two-year quest for his own tactical nuclear weapon.

According to Israeli military intelligence, he turned to Kazakhstan because it has a substantial Muslim population.

stan to try to head off Bin Laden's efforts.

Western intelligence experts said they were not surprised by Bin Laden's efforts, but did not believe he would be successful. "It's true to form," said David Long, an American counterintelligence expert formerly with the State Department. "People like Bin Laden, who are fanatical and have a lot of money, can be fanciful. It would be virtually impossible for him to succeed in overcoming the difficulty in putting together a nuclear weapon and making it work."

For several months American intelligence officials have been monitoring Bin Laden's

movements inside Afghanistan from the Pakistani frontier town of Peshawar. There was also debate last week about whether an American commando team could seize or kill the fugitive financier should he be accused of a role in the east African bombings.

However, an intelligence official ruled out such an operation. Plucking a well guarded terrorist from such a hostile, remote country as Afghanistan was no simple mission, even with the co-operation of Pakistan, said the source: "It would be very hard even for the best trained unit. You can't go roaming around in Afghanistan without being noticed."

Bari Atwan, the editor of Al-Quds, a London-based Arabic newspaper, is one of the few outsiders to visit the "bat cave". Bin Laden was entirely at home there, Atwan said, and he outlined for Atwan a set of goals that can be interpreted as a chilling harbinger of the east African bombings.

"We saw the Riyadh and Al-Khobar bombings as a sufficient signal for people of intelligence among American decision-makers to avoid the real battle between the nation of Islam and the American forces, but it seems they didn't understand the signal," Bin Laden said.

The Israeli sources also said that Bin Laden was looking for a tactical nuclear weapon, or "suitcase bombs", the weapon every intelligence agency dreads falling into the hands of a terrorist.

So worried were the Israelis that they sent one of their cabinet members to Kazakh-

"Military people are not unaware that preparations for major operations take a certain amount of time, unlike minor operations. If we wanted small actions, the matter would have been easily carried out. But the nature of the battle calls for operations of a specific type that will make an impact on the enemy, and this, of course, calls for excellent preparation."

Atwan said Bin Laden was completely committed to his aim of driving the Americans out of Saudi Arabia and ultimately the Middle East. The world's most wanted man became almost tearful when he spoke of the presence of "infidels" on the land of Mecca and Medina.

"He said his dream is to die a martyr," Atwan said. "And I believed him."

ISLAM TERROR

PLOT THAT

SPARKED A

GLOBAL WAR

16 August 1998 **The Observer**

Origins of the conspiracy behind the anti-American bombings in Africa are traced by **Lawrence Joffe, Martin Bright and Arnold Kemp**

HIGH IN THE MOUNTAINS of eastern Afghanistan a group of radical Islamic leaders from around the world gathered in February to endorse a religious decree, or fatwa. It created a united World Islamic Front dedicated to killing Americans and Jews and was, in effect, a declaration of war on the Western world.

Presiding over the meeting was Ossama bin Laden, the enormously wealthy Afghanistan-based Saudi fighter believed to have masterminded terrorist attacks on American servicemen in Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

Bin Laden retreated to his headquarters near Kandahar after attempts by CIA agents to capture him. There he received leaders from throughout the Muslim world — from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Egypt.

They included Shaykh Mir Hamzah, secretary of the Jamiat-Ulema-e Pakistan, a grouping of radical Pakistani clerics with four seats in parliament. The presence of so significant a figure confirms the singular importance of Pakistan in the miasma of fundamentalism.

On 23 February, Bin Laden signed — and his fellow leaders countersigned — a fatwa proclaiming the World Islamic Front, a coalition with a mission. 'To kill Americans and their allies — civilians and military — is an individual duty for every Muslim,' it declared.

The Front brought together the 'Afghani Arabs', Muslims radicalised in the fight against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Many came out of the religious schools in Pakistan which spawned the Taliban, the 'soldier monks' now tightening

their grip on Afghanistan.

The Front also united militants throughout the Muslim world, including two of fundamentalist Islam's most dangerous groups — the Egyptian Gama'a al-Islamiya (gathering), and Islamic Jihad, responsible for attacks on gov-

ernment officials and foreign tourists.

The failure of the fatwa to distinguish between military and civilian personnel meant open season for the proliferating Islamic groups now joined in Bin Laden's loose confederation.

The genie was out of the bottle. And the question is: Bin Laden may be patron and sponsor of Islamic terrorism — but is it now out of control?

Noorullah Zadran, first secretary of the Taliban mission to the United Nations, said

last night that Bin Laden had been warned never again to proclaim holy war from Afghan soil. He said: 'I think he got the message.'

He said the bombing attacks on American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, which the US has accused Bin Laden of sponsoring, were 'hideous and heinous'.

'We condemn it 100 per cent. We pray to God that whoever did this act, whether person or group, will be brought to justice.'

Yesterday the Taliban forces tightened their hold on northern Afghanistan, the last point of resistance to their control of their country. The statement to *The Observer* shows their wish for international recognition. They also hope that a US oil company will open a gas pipeline from central Asia to Pakistan through Afghanistan.

The explicit denunciation of Bin Laden also reflects embarrassment that it was the *fatwa* he and other fundamentalist leaders signed in Afghanistan in February that sanctioned the killing of Americans and Jews irrespective of whether they were civilian or military personnel.

FAR FROM AFGHANISTAN, in the quiet suburbs of north London, associates of Bin Laden and other militants have been trying to make sense of events that have left them troubled and puzzled.

The Islamic Observation Centre, which reported the arrest of Othman in Albania, is

run by Yasser el-Sirri, who was also sentenced to death for alleged involvement in the attempt on Sedki's life.

Egypt complains that the centre is the London mouth-piece of the New Vanguards of Conquest Group, an offshoot of the Jihad movement, which warned of more attacks after the Luxor massacre of tourists last year. Cairo has bitterly criticised Britain's tolerance, especially after Luxor.

The London-based militants claim to be genuine asylum-seekers from repressive regimes. El-Sirri claims to have no links with any terror group. He rejects the verdict of a military trial held in absentia.

When he spoke through an interpreter to *The Observer* he said that, while feeling sorry for the African victims, he saw

the bombings as a sign that America's policy in the Muslim world was not working.

He said: 'The US is guilty of state terrorism, uses force in its foreign policy and morally has no right to criticise others.'

From a semi in Dollis Hill, London, Khaled al-Fawwaz, British spokesman for Bin Laden's Saudi opposition group, maintains contact with Bin Laden through a network in Pakistan and acts as a conduit for communiqués issued by the Saudi opposition.

To him, the formation of a World Islamic Front marks a significant shift in the geopolitics of Islamic fundamentalism. He sees Bin Laden as one of the great heroes of the modern Arab world.

But he says: 'If Ossama was behind this [the bombings] he

definitely would not be afraid to say it.'

He added: 'It is against Muslim law to kill innocent civilians.' He clearly found it puzzling that the African attacks should have risked killing so many of his fellow Muslims.

A few blocks away from Fawwaz in Dollis Hill lives Dr Sa'ad al-Faqih, formerly a leading 'keyhole surgeon' in Saudi Arabia and now director of the Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia.

He said: 'It's a shame so many innocent Kenyans had to die for the sake of just a

dozen Americans. Bin Laden and I walk different pathways but our aims are the same.'

He added: 'People still don't understand how corrupt Saudi Arabia is, a country where 10,000 royals take 40 per cent of the national wealth.'

Dr Mohammed al-Mas'ari, London director of the Committee for the Defence of Legitimate Rights, successfully evaded deportation in 1996 after considerable pressure from the Saudi regime.

He, too, was puzzled by the African attacks, which he thought did not appear to bear the imprimatur of Bin Laden,

but were more likely to have been carried out by freelance groups inspired by the *fatwa*.

He added: 'The attacks were clumsy. They should have gone in by air. Bin Laden has Stinger missiles and planes.' He knew Bin Laden wanted to hit the Americans hard, but he had expected the attack to be made in Saudi Arabia itself.

Mas'ari said the emergence of freelance groups represented a significant threat to the West.

'It's like a cluster bomb effect. It's dangerous — no one knows where the next attack will come from.'

AT THE END OF JULY an Islamic website carried an interview published in *al-Murabitoun*, organ of Gama'a al-Islamiya, Egypt's largest underground organisation.

In it one of its exiled leaders, Abu Yasser Rifai Taha, who signed the *fatwa* in February, said that the group was 'not a member of the Islamic Front for Holy War against the Jews and Crusaders (the West)'.

Observers were puzzled. But after the bombings they speculated that al-Gama'a had heard of the plans to carry them out, disapproved and wanted to disown them. For

the West, that is the most terrifying thing about the dark shadow cast by Bin Laden.

The proliferating Islamist groups have become an increasingly sophisticated modern fighting force, using the Internet, computers, mobile telephones and satellite communications.

Under Bin Laden's 'sponsorship' they can wreak havoc, sanctified by a *fatwa* which asserts that no distinction should be made between American civilians and servicemen. It is a licence for carnage.

'It's a shame so many innocent Kenyans had to die for the sake of just a dozen Americans'

Photograph of mourners at the memorial service in Nairobi by

Lucy Hannan on why the bombers targeted Nairobi to blast their message to the world

UNTIL THE EXPLOSION that ripped through Nairobi, sub-Saharan Africa had no reason to see itself as an arena for international terrorism. Then Kenya found to its cost that if you want to deliver a message to the world, this is good place to do it', its Foreign Minister, Boyana Godana, said grimly.

Kenya has the biggest concentration of diplomats, US staff, international organisations and foreign press in the region — and in some cases, on the continent. It is a crucial power base in a region infamous for past wars and famines, as well as a major tourist destination.

'It has come as a shock to us,' said Godana in an interview with *The Observer*. 'For every American killed, over 20 Kenyans lost their life. If the US embassy had been on the outskirts of the city, the human and economic cost would not have been so colossal.'

The US stands accused of being staggeringly unprepared in Nairobi. Ambassador Prudence Bushnell had asked the State Department at least three times since December to move or improve the embassy. Unusual for the fortressed embassies usually seen in the region, this one backed on to central Nairobi's financial buildings and shared pavements that pass the railway station and the industrial badlands.

But Godana appealed to Kenyans not to show bitterness.

His country has never been neutral. In the Nineties it has been the heartland of a mostly unspoken regional US policy to keep back the march of Islamic fundamentalism in the Horn of Africa.

Used as a vital military base for US troops in Somalia in 1992-3, Kenya has long been crucial to the operations of the

Sudan People's Liberation Army — a movement known to enjoy covert US support in the attempt to isolate the fundamentalist Khartoum regime.

One of the after-effects of the bombing may be a sober and terrible reminder that — although it has become routine in the West to express a sort of post-Cold War despair over continued war and famine in the region — Africa is just as much an international political football pitch as ever it was.

'Fighting on the frontlines of democracy' — as William Cohen, of the State Department, referred to it when the 11 American bodies arrived home on Wednesday — translates here into funding for multiparty elections, non-governmental organisations and building up civic institutions.

It is a strategy pursuing political ideals and values that the US, as the world's only superpower, now believes inevitable.

But the pace of the push is something that some governments in the region — notably Uganda and Eritrea — have tried to put a brake on. Now, Godana also wonders aloud whether external pressure weakens security and increases vulnerability, if 'this drive for political and economic reforms contributes to, and aggravates, instability'.

A senior government source, a Muslim, is concerned that the attack might encourage a new sort of politics in Kenya. 'There is no Holy War here, but my fear now is that people might see there is a bigger power that can be used with dreadful effect,' he said.

He knows of a small number of Kenyans who have died fighting 'the Holy War' in Somalia. 'We are not an island, and even less so now.'

Today's new cult hero

29/8/98 ECONOMIST

MENTION the name of Osama bin Laden in a Saudi public place and heads will turn, first to check that nobody from the government is listening, and then to give you their views. The exiled Saudi millionaire, branded by America as a terrorist mastermind, is fast becoming a cult hero to many of his more devout countrymen. Although few Saudis and other Gulf Arabs supported the bombing of American embassies in East Africa, most were appalled by America's reaction. The lethal shower of Tomahawk cruise missiles on alleged terrorist facilities in the Muslim countries of Sudan and Afghanistan appears to them to be a crude and outdated way of putting the world to rights.

In the absence of public evidence from America, Arabs around the world doubt that the destroyed pharmaceutical factory in Khartoum was really producing the ingredients for nerve gas. They recall America's blunder ten years ago when one of its warships shot down an Iranian airliner over the Gulf. But though Sudan now commands the attention of the Arab League, it is Mr bin Laden who commands an increasing fascination for ordinary Arabs. After all, he has survived—by the grace of God, as he put it—a devastating attack on his Afghan base by the world's only superpower. Just as Iraq's Saddam Hussein was able to pop up from the rubble of cruise-missile strikes with his regime intact, Mr bin Laden's survival enhances his stature. Almost overnight, everyone in the region wants to know who he is and what he stands for.

Born in the 1950s of a Yemeni father and Saudi mother, he is one of 55 siblings and half-siblings who grew up in Saudi Arabia at a time when oil was changing the country beyond recognition. His family made a fortune as builders, and when the young Osama took off for Afghanistan in 1979 to help the mujahideen fight the

Soviet invaders, he used his family connections to import bulldozers for building tunnels and caves. He became a rallying-point for thousands of "Arab Afghans", volunteers from as far away as Egypt and Algeria.

When the Russians left Afghanistan, he returned to Saudi Arabia with impeccable credentials as a holy warrior in the Islamic cause. But after ten years of living an ascetic existence in the mountains, he found his homeland well below his purist ideals. By 1990, Arabia was awash with American troops—some Jewish and some female—and his government was apparently embracing them. In his eyes, the sacred land of Mecca and Medina was being desecrated. Within four years, his strident criticism of the ruling al-Saud family had seen him exiled to Sudan, stripped of Saudi nationality and disowned by his rich and law-abiding brothers. But by 1996, his ever-stronger

links to militant Islamist groups had led the Sudanese government to be pressed into expelling him too. He found refuge in Afghanistan.

By now the CIA had named him as the prime financier behind the bombing of the World Trade Centre in 1993. It also implicated him in the 1996 Khobar Towers bombing in Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 American servicemen, an act for which the Saudis have not named suspects. Mr bin Laden denied his involvement in either bombing, but called the perpetrators "heroes".

At that time, to most people in the Gulf, he was still a little-known extremist with dangerous friends. Now, with the Arab-Israeli peace process in tatters, his words are striking a chord with many on the Saudi street. American foreign policy, he claims, is heavily biased against the world's 1.2 billion Muslims. He cites America's acquiescence with the expansionist policies of the Israeli government and its refusal to condemn Israel for the shelling of Lebanese civilians at Qana in 1996, and he blames America for the deaths of thousands of Iraqi children through prolonged UN sanctions. Regardless of the facts, these are sentiments shared by millions of Arabs, including many in the Saudi ruling family.

Mr bin Laden's *bête noire* is the American forces on Arabian soil. He calls them the "new crusaders" and, in the past few months, he has told the media that, if American forces do not leave his homeland, then neither they nor the 30,000 American citizens in Saudi Arabia will be safe from attack.

Not surprisingly, his existence is a huge embarrassment to the Saudi government. Despite its misgivings over America's Israeli policy, it has a deep military and economic partnership with America. But if Mr bin Laden makes good on his threats, Saudi Arabia risks being the recipient of the next terrorist attack.

The Taliban

In charge, again

ECONOMIST 29/8/98

THE cruise missiles that flew into Afghanistan to destroy a suspected terrorist training camp have further unsettled the politics of the region. The advance of the Taliban in the north has left most of the country under their control. The fervent Islamist militia is encamped once again along the border with a nervous Central Asia. To the south in Peshawar, the main border town in Pakistan, the backlash against America and growing support for a holy war—*jihad*—are all too clear, as protesters spill on to the streets.

Fourteen months ago, the Taliban were in a similar position in Afghanistan. But their fighters had to retreat when deals with local warlords collapsed. Now they intend to stay. To do so they need money and the continued support of their main allies, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Hence the difficulty over Osama bin Laden (see page 40), the exiled Saudi militant whom America accuses of being behind the attacks on its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania: he is living in Afghanistan and was running the camp hit by the missiles.

Handing Mr bin Laden over to the Americans would clearly damage the Taliban's Islamist credentials. Nevertheless, the group does seem prepared for some sort of compromise. Its main leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, has reportedly told Mr bin Laden to stop making threats

against America from Afghan soil. And in contrast to their recent obstruction of aid workers, the Taliban helped, when asked, with a swift evacuation of foreigners from the country.

Where all this leaves Afghanistan's neighbours is less clear. The government of Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan is beleaguered by a financial calamity and badly needs America's help to bail out its economy. That help may be provided if Pakistan signs conventions on nuclear arms. Yet the Islamists want to see an end to Pakistan's links with America. On top of that, Pakistan's religious parties seem likely to gain support as an alternative to the corruption of the bureaucracy and traditional political parties.

The ex-Soviet politicians who now run Central Asia are just as nervous. Uzbekistan and Tajikistan agreed in May with Russia to try to counter the spread of extremist Islam. There have been arrests and show trials to discredit hundreds of Muslims. Turkmenistan, however, has shared a border with the Taliban now for three years and is less concerned. Religious activism probably counts for little beside the personality cult now surrounding Turkmenistan's President Saparmurad Niazov. The country would also like a route for the export of its gas that did not pass through Russia; Afghanistan could provide it.

Securing trade routes through Afghanistan to Central Asia and its vast hydrocarbon and mineral resources will lead foreigners to try to do business with the Taliban. That may include Americans, even though the missiles will have suspended some business ambitions for a while. American officials this week repeated that the Taliban must honour international norms on human rights, drugs and terrorism. It remains to be seen how far foreigners will press the Taliban on such issues when the dealing eventually begins.

Aid work in the world's poorest country loses in America's war on terrorists

Suzanne Goldenberg in Islamabad meets relief workers who have fled Afghanistan to escape revenge for US air strikes

IN THE coffee shop of Islamabad's sole five-star hotel, a group of aid workers, who fled Afghanistan two weeks ago in fear for their lives, pore over the international job ads in the latest Economist.

For the aid workers, whose flight was prompted by threats of retaliation for the US strikes against suspected terrorist bases in Afghanistan, the enforced idleness means days whiled away at swimming pools and golf courses until it is safe to return. Last week, a United Nations employee died in Kabul of bullet injuries after his car came under fire a day after the strikes.

For Afghanistan, reduced by a generation of war to the poorest country on earth, the exodus could deliver the final blow to a mission undermined by mutual incomprehension between aid workers and the Taliban.

Some aid agencies began returning last week to the Pakistani city of Peshawar, which they had fled within hours of the US attack. Privately, UN officials do not expect to return to Kabul for up to three months, jeopardising food aid, demining, health, sanitation and other programmes.

The international community last year gave less than £150 million to Afghanistan. There is a reluctance to prop up a regime that — apart from human rights abuses — is the world's biggest producer of heroin, and is pursuing a war against its opponents.

"Our big fear is that the donors will now say, 'Yes, this is a country of terrorists', and withdraw funding," said a British aid worker.

In the two years since the Taliban captured Kabul, aid agencies have often been caught up in the struggle by the conquering puritans to impose their unbending, rural, Pushtun version of Islam on a sophisticated and Sovietised capital.

"The question is: what role are the aid agencies perceived to have by the Taliban? In other words, do they want us, or don't they?" said Charles MacFadden, the director of the Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief, representing more than 70 agencies.

The answer is unclear, despite a Taliban offer to guarantee the security of aid workers, and the speed with which they arrested the sus-

pected killers of the UN employee.

On July 20, the Taliban expelled some 200 international staff of non-governmental organisations in Kabul, who had balked at a demand that all aid agencies move into a derelict building.

In June, the European Union cut funding to Kabul-based programmes in protest at the Taliban's refusal to allow women in a city of 10,000 widows to seek paid employment, and its ban on education for girls.

Last October, the UN and other agencies were forced to retreat from Mazar-i-Sharif, then controlled by the Taliban's opponents, because of lawlessness.

Relations between the aid community and the Taliban have been bedevilled by the Westerners' reluctance to accept the militia's authority. And the Taliban are angered at what they see as a Western obsession with women's rights.

Attempts at reconciliation were under way — until the air strikes, which set back months of negotiations between the Taliban, the UN and other aid agencies. They are likely also to have deterred the World Bank, which had undertaken studies on road and irrigation projects.

Funding from the Middle East is unlikely to fill the funding gap. Middle Eastern governments drastically cut back aid to Afghanistan after the Russian retreat and the Gulf war.

In Peshawar, budget cuts have forced the Kuwaiti Red Crescent to shut down all but 70 beds in a 220-bed hospital. Arab doctors have been sent home because their wages were too expensive. "The donors are not as generous as before," said Ahmed Sunesi Ahmed, a Sudanese pharmacist who runs the hospital.

Afghan aid workers in the city complain that Middle Eastern largesse rarely reached ordinary people. "They were donating lots of money just for fighting purposes," said Qamaruddin Jabar Khiel, the director of the Afghan Development Agency.

The Taliban do not appear to share the gloom of their potential benefactors. They argue that Afghanistan's wretchedness is God's will. "If God is happy for us to live amid this destruction, we are always happy," a Taliban leader told reporters recently.

The Guardian
1/9/98

Afghans accused of exporting terror to China's far west

John Gittings in Hong Kong

MUSLIM terrorists trained by the Afghan fundamentalist Taliban are infiltrating China's far west, according to an unusually candid briefing by senior Communist Party officials.

This open admission makes it clear that China now regards the threat of Islamist insurrection in the vast Xinjiang region, astride the ancient Silk Road, as more serious than the independence demonstrations in neighbouring Tibet.

"Hardcore elements who have received instruction in 'Afghanistan' are said to have slipped across the border and to be 'inciting young people to violence on the pretext of religion'." There has been a series of riots, bombings and assassinations in Xinjiang in the past year, but China usually claims that these are the work of local criminals.

Wang Lequan, party secretary for Xinjiang, told Hong Kong journalists that up to 20 training bases had been set up by "militant splitters".

He said that they comprised small groups of youths, instructed by the hardcore terrorists. The latter, he maintained, had now "all been captured", while most of the youths they had misled had been released "after receiving education".

Mr Wang's claims of success are obviously intended for the ears of Beijing, where senior leaders recently castigated local officials for failing

to crack down on the "terrorists". The Chinese security forces, he said, had launched a "stern assault" against "national spiritualism" and "illegal religious activities".

In reality the struggle is intensifying, although police and border guards have taken very tough action against the alleged terrorists, some of whom have been executed.

Local Chinese propaganda

says that they must be dealt with "like a rat, of whom,

there have also been dis-

turberances in the Kashgar area, leading to restrictions on foreign tourism. Unofficial reports last month said that eight Kashgar policemen had been killed.

China has been making a big diplomatic effort to build bridges to the new independent states of former Soviet Central Asia. The president of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov, has just ended a six-day visit to China.

The two countries agreed to

more against any subversive

action launched from either

territory. Their police will

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— a euphemism for Islamist

and anti-Chinese literature.

Last month President Jiang

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Mr Jiang urged local officials

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threat lightly".



3/9/98 The Guardian

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Saudis secretly funding Taliban

independent

2/9-78

BY ROBERT FISK
Middle East Correspondent

ON THE face of it, Nawaf Obaid's report looks like any other student thesis prepared for Harvard's John F Kennedy School of Government.

Entitled "Improving US Intelligence Analysis on the Saudi Arabian Decision Making Process", it might have mouldered on the shelves of the State Department official who requested it.

But the young Saudi's detailed account of kingly indecision, American ignorance and secret Saudi funding for the world's most ruthless Muslim militia has enraged his country's government, by revealing the Kingdom's religious divisions and its secret support for the Taliban in Afghanistan.

Quoting Saudi government officials, army officers and members of the Saudi National Guard, Obaid, who toured the remote conservative villages of Saudi Arabia last year but is now staying in Geneva, concludes that "US analysts have underestimated, overlooked or misunderstood the nature, strength and goals of the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia, as well as the extent to which the secular leaders are beholden to this group".

Had US intelligence operatives "had a deeper understanding of the religious situation in Saudi Arabia", he says, they might have been able to prevent the 1996 bombing at Dhahran, which killed 19 Americans.

Until now, the Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden, now in Afghanistan, has been blamed for the bomb.

The first part of Obaid's thesis details the covert pressure of Saudi preachers on King Faisal to order an oil embargo against the United States after the 1973 Middle East war, a step he eventually took "to pre-empt internal dissent and satisfy the growing frustration of the *ulema* (religious authorities)".

But it is the second half of his report, and its evidence of the immense power wielded by the most conservative elements in the Kingdom, that has so upset the Saudis.

He quotes a "senior official" at the Saudi ministry of justice - a member of the al-Shaikh family who have held the highest religious offices in the Kingdom - as saying King Fahd sought the help of his senior religious leaders before allowing US troops to land in Saudi Arabia after Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait in 1990. "All the senior *ulema* were categorically against the idea," a court official is quoted as telling Obaid. "It was only after long discussions with the King ... that Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Bin Baz reluctantly gave his endorsement to the idea on condition that solid proof be presented as to the [Iraqi] threat."

The King was persuaded to admit the US forces after a meeting of the Saudi High Command at which General Saleh el-Mahya, the army commander, talked of the "pitiful lack of uniformed men" in his forces and General Ahmad Beheri, the air force commander, said that, given the strength of Iraqi land forces, a Saudi air defence would be "futile".

US Defense Secretary Dick Cheney would later promise that US troops would not stay in Saudi Arabia "a minute longer than they were needed".

A meeting of 350 *ulemas* at Mecca eventually agreed to the temporary US military presence.

But to appease the *ulema*, King Fahd was forced to make concessions, increasing the authority of the Mutaween, the religious police who impose the strictest laws of Wahhabism, a purist Islamic faith originally expounded by Mohamed bin Abdul Wahab, whose descendants are now the powerful al-Shaikh family. For Wahhabis, only the strictest Islamic law is valid, while unbelievers are infidels, deserving punishment.

This same religious police would later create the Taliban's Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and Suppression of Vice, which has made Afghan women prisoners in their own homes.

In Saudi Arabia, Obaid says, the US underestimated the *ulemas'* dissatisfaction when American troops stayed on.

Thus, the bombers who struck at US personnel, first in

the capital, Riyadh, and then in Dhahran, "did not originate externally, but derived their theological and strategic underpinnings from the mainstream Wahhabi sect".

As resentment grew and Sheikh Salman al-Audah and Sheikh Safar al-Hawali demanded the withdrawal of US troops, Saudi security forces found that their followers tried to prevent their arrest.

According to a former interior ministry official, Obaid says, the region's governor, Prince Faisal bin Bandar, went to Riyadh "to seek ... assistance from the special forces of the

Ministry of Interior". US intelligence officers "should have recognised the significance ... that this 'extremist' group gained enormous popular support through propaganda that directly targeted US, French and British troops".

Obaid quotes a former senior Pakistani civil servant saying that in Afghanistan "the US provided the weapons and the know-how, the Saudis provided the funds, and we provided the training camps ... for the Islamic Legions in the early 1980s and then for the Taliban."

The Saudis and the US chose the Taliban, Obaid says, with the belief that they would be able to take over Afghanistan.

But it was the Taliban's supreme commander who would later demand "a removal of all US troops from Saudi Arabia". Ominously, Obaid adds, "this is the same call made by

Wahhabi fundamentalists in the Kingdom before the Riyadh and Dhahran bombings. And if Mr bin Laden actually was behind these attacks, there is even more reason to fear Taliban-inspired terrorism."

Obaid goes on: "According to a high-ranking official in the [Saudi] ministry of justice, Sheikh Mohamed bin Jubier [current chairman of the Saudi Consultative Council], who has been called the 'exporter' of the Wahhabi creed in the Muslim world, was a strong advocate of aiding the Taliban."

The connection should have been clear to US operatives in the region, as it was known that the Taliban were largely composed of Afghan refugees from Pakistani theological schools, whose clerics "received their degrees from Saudi Arabia and taught a strict form of Wahhabi theology and law".

Der unendliche Krieg am Hindukusch

Im hungernden Afghanistan herrscht an Waffen und fremden Einflüssen kein Mangel / Von Werner Adam

Afghanistan erhält kaum noch humanitäre Hilfe. Die radikal-islamistischen Taliban haben nahezu alle Mitarbeiter internationaler Organisationen als unliebsame Zeugen ihrer mittelalterlichen Herrschaft zum Verlassen des Landes gezwungen. Dagegen hält der Zufluss von Waffen nach jüngsten Untersuchungen der Vereinten Nationen unvermindert an. Weder die vornehmlich aus Paschtunen bestehenden Milizen der Taliban, die rund zwei Drittel dieses Wüsten- und Bergstaates in Zentralasien kontrollieren, noch die hauptsächlich von Tadschiken und Usbeken gebildete Nordallianz unter dem aus Kabul vertriebenen Staatspräsidenten Burhanuddin Rabbani scheinen Schwierigkeiten zu haben, aus dem Ausland Nachschub zu erhalten. Auch am nötigen Geld fehlt es nicht. Alle Kriegsparteien finanzieren sich zu einem nicht unbeträchtlichen Teil durch Rauschgiftgeschäfte. Internationale Beobachter des zerstörerischen Geschehens am Fuße des Hindukusch sind der Meinung, wenn nicht alles, so drehe sich doch vieles um die Beherrschung des Rauschgiftanbaus und des dazugehörigen Handels in Afghanistan. Hinzukommt die Verfechtung geopolitischer, religiös-ideologischer und energetischer Interessen nicht nur der engen Nachbarschaft. Auch Rußland und die Vereinten Staaten widmen dem zerstörten Land wieder größere Aufmerksamkeit, nachdem es, kaum daß die letzte

ten Sowjetsoldaten im Februar 1989 das von ihnen zehn Jahre lang drangsalierte Afghanistan verlassen hatten, bei den Russen wie bei den Amerikanern in Vergessenheit geraten zu sein schien. Aus Washington ist zu hören, die Nordallianz unter dem tadschikischen Militärführer Ahmed Schah Massud und dem usbekischen General Abdul Raschid Dostum werde von Moskau mit schweren Waffen versorgt und in ihrem Kampf gegen die Taliban zudem logistisch unterstützt. Dafür spricht zum einen, daß im benachbarten Tadschikistan etwa 20 000 russische Soldaten vornehmlich zur Bewachung der Grenze zu Afghanistan stationiert sind und Waffenlieferungen an Massud und Dostum sich mithin leicht bewerkstelligen lassen. Zum anderen weiß sich Moskau der Zustimmung aller ehemaligen Sowjetrepubliken Zentralasiens sicher, wenn es dazu aufruft, einen Damm gegen radikal-islamistische Strömungen aus Afghanistan zu bauen. Ironie der Geschichte: Rußland setzt auf Massud und damit auf jenen afghanischen Militärführer, der einst im Kampf gegen die Rote Armee besonders erfolgreich war.

Die Nordallianz wird allerdings nicht nur von Rußland unterstützt; auch Iran ist mit von der Partie. Teheran will verhindern, daß Afghanistan vollends unter die Kontrolle der sunnitischen Taliban gerät, deren Radikalismus sogar den Mullahs in Iran mißfällt. Letztere halten es, was aus

religiöser Sicht nicht überraschen kann, vor allem mit den afghanischen Schiiten und mit deren Kampforganisation Hezbi-Wahdat. Es gibt zugleich ein gemeinsames russisch-irantisches Interesse, das darin besteht, sich Einfluß auf den künftigen Erdöl- und Erdgastransport aus dem Kaspiischen Becken zu den Märkten in Asien und Europa zu sichern. In Moskau wie in Teheran wird mit wachsendem Unbehagen die Tätigkeit amerikanischer Konzerne rund um das Kaspiische Meer verfolgt. Rußland und Iran wähnen sich durch die anhaltenden Benützungen der Vereinigten Staaten herausgefordert, die Iraner aus dem zentralasiatischen Energietransfer völlig herauszuhalten und die bisherige russische Dominanz einzudämmen. Daher könnte besonders Teheran an einer Fortsetzung des Bürgerkriegs in Afghanistan interessiert sein, weil es amerikanische Pläne gibt, die den Bau von Erdöl- und Erdgasleitungen von Turkmenistan unter Umgekehrtem Verfahren zu den gegenwärtig von den Taliban beherrschten Teil Afghanistans nach Pakistan und damit zum offenen Meer vorzehn.

Nicht nur deswegen hält es Pakistan umgekehrt mit den Taliban. Abgesehen davon, daß deren Führer ihre islamische Schulung von pakistanischen Mullahs in afghanischen Flüchtlingslagern erhalten haben, erhofft man sich in Islamabād von einer Ausweitung der Taliban-Herrschaft ungestörten Zugang zu den

Haupthukette
Augsburg 1/8
, 998

Tysk press

Märkten in den ehemals sowjetischen Republiken Zentralasiens. Allerdings kommt Pakistan mehr und mehr den politischen Unmut vor allem Tadschikistans und Usbekistans darüber zu spüren, daß es die radikale Bewegung unterstützt. Mindestens ebenso fragwürdig ist die Rolle Saudi-Arabiens, das neben den Taliban auch andere islamistische Extremisten bis hin nach Kaschmir finanziert. Das Regime in Kabul bestätigte unlängst offiziell den Besuch des saudischen Geheimdienstchefs, Prinz Turki al-Faisal, ebendort.

Ob die jüngsten amerikanischen Berichte über ein wiedererstarkendes russisches Engagement in Afghanistan auf ein soisches auch der Vereinigten Staaten schließen lassen, steht dahin. Deutlicher als je zuvor hat Washington jetzt allerdings Vermutungen bestätigt, es neige, schon weil Moskau und Teheran das Gemeinleben, mehr den Taliban zu. Außerdem spricht zum einen, daß im benachbarten Tadschikistan etwa 20 000 russische Soldaten herausgefordert, die Iraner aus dem zentralasiatischen Energietransfer völlig herauszuhalten und die bisherige russische Dominanz einzudämmen. Daher könnte besonders Teheran an einer Fortsetzung des Bürgerkriegs in Afghanistan interessiert sein, weil es amerikanische Pläne gibt, die den Bau von Erdöl- und Erdgasleitungen von Turkmenistan unter Umgekehrtem Verfahren zu den gegenwärtig von den Taliban beherrschten Teil Afghanistans nach Pakistan und damit zum offenen Meer vorzehn.

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Rußland versucht die Wirren in Afghanistan zu nutzen

Interesse an Öl vorkommen in der Region / Die Taliban vor Mazar-i-Scharif / Von Christiane Hoffmann

MOSKAU, 6. August. Im vergangenen Sommer hatten die radikal-islamischen Taliban sie schon einmal unter ihre Herrschaft gebracht: die Stadt Mazar-i-Scharif im Norden Afghanistans, die Hochburg der Nordallianz, die sich gegen die Taliban zusammengeschlossen hat. Verrat hatte die Eroberung möglich gemacht, aber sie war nicht von Dauer. Im September wurden die paschtunischen Taliban wieder aus der Stadt vertrieben. In Afghanistan kursiert das Gerücht, eine russische Spezialeinheit hätte damals die Initialzündung zur Vertreibung der Taliban ausgelöst.

Nun stehen die Taliban nach unterschiedlichen Angaben wieder 50 bis 80 Kilometer vor Mazar-i-Scharif. In den vergangenen Tagen eroberten sie – offenbar unter Einsatz von Kampfflugzeugen – eine Reihe wichtiger Orte in den umliegenden Provinzen. Das Vordringen der Taliban hat Moskau, das fast zehn Jahre nach dem Abzug seiner Streitkräfte aus Afghanistan noch immer und wieder verstärkt seine Interessen in der Region vertritt, auf den Plan gerufen. Der stellvertretende russische Außenminister Pastuchow und Generalstabschef Kwaschnin hielten sich in dieser Woche in Taschkent auf, um mit der usbekischen Führung über die Lage im Norden Afghanistans zu beraten. In einer Erklärung forderten sie die Taliban auf, „unverzüglich ihre militärischen Handlungen einzustellen“. Die Taliban versuchten, so die Erklärung, „mit Hilfe groß angelegter Unterstützung von außen das afghanische Problem mit Waffengewalt zu lösen“.

Angesichts des Vormarschs der Taliban haben sich die rivalisierenden Führer der Nordallianz enger zusammengeschlossen. Der tadschikische Militärführer Massud wurde zum Oberbefehlshaber der Allianz ernannt, der auch der ehemalige Präsident Rabbani und der usbekische General Dostum angehören. Die ethnisch und politisch sehr unterschiedlichen Führer der Nordallianz sind nur durch ihre Gegnerschaft zu den Taliban verbunden. Nach den Erfolgen der Taliban in jüngster Zeit, dürften sie nun auf besser koordinierten Widerstand stoßen. Dostum soll allerdings in den vergangenen Tagen versucht haben, in das benachbarte Usbekistan zu fliehen, wo ihm aber die Einreise verweigert worden sei. Die Taliban sind zu Verhandlungen nicht bereit. Die nördlichen Provinzen Afghanistans würden „ausschließlich mit militärischen Mitteln befreit“, sagte einer ihrer Vertreter nach Angaben der Agentur Itar-Tass am Donnerstag in Islamabad. Für die Taliban sei „nur die völlige Aufgabe des Widerstands und die Auslieferung der Feinde in die Gefangenschaft“ annehmbar.

Daß es den Taliban gelingen könnte, das ganze Land zu erobern und dauerhaft

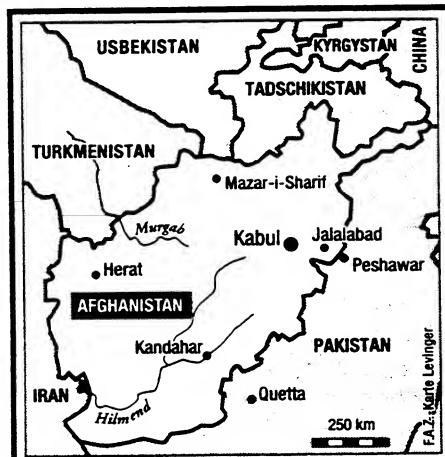
unter ihrer Herrschaft zu halten, ist kaum denkbar. „Es ist unwahrscheinlich, daß aufgrund von militärischen Kampfhandlungen je Frieden in Afghanistan gefunden werden kann“, sagt der Schweizer Afghanistankenner Bucherer, der gerade zehn Wochen lang in dem Bürgerkriegsland herumgereist ist. Zwar haben die radikal-islamischen Kämpfer zwei Drittel des afghanischen Territoriums unter ihre Herrschaft gebracht. Aber nur etwa die Hälfte der Einwohner lebt unter dem religiösen Regime der Taliban. Zudem ist die wirtschaftliche Situation der Menschen in den Gebieten der Nordallianz deutlich besser als in den anderen Landesteilen einschließ-

Auch der Nordallianz nämlich wird von äußerern Kräften geholfen. Daß die Gegner der Taliban von Rußland und Iran mit Waffen und Logistik unterstützt werden, ist seit langem bekannt. Für Moskau bieten die Wirren in Afghanistan eine Möglichkeit, den eigenen Einfluß in der Region zu stärken. Wie der Iran möchte auch Rußland möglichst weitgehend an der Ausbeutung der Öl- und Gasvorkommen der Kaspischen Region beteiligt werden und das Feld nicht Washington überlassen. Auch gibt es in Moskau Kräfte, die die alte Vormachtstellung Rußlands in Zentralasien nicht aufgeben möchten.

Die an Afghanistan grenzenden ehemaligen Sowjetrepubliken Usbekistan, Tadschikistan und auch Turkmenistan sehen sich durch das Vordringen der Taliban von islamistischem Einfluß, Flüchtlingsströmen und allgemeiner Unsicherheit bedroht und lehnen sich verstärkt an Moskau an. Usbekistan hat die angestrebte Vorreiterrolle unter den ehemaligen Sowjetrepubliken Zentralasiens nicht ausfüllen können. Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und vor allem die Reformen blieben weit hinter den Erwartungen nach dem Ende der Sowjetunion zurück. Das Regime Präsident Karimows geht in jüngster Zeit drastisch gegen islamische Kräfte vor.

Im Nachbarland Tadschikistan sind als einzigem Nachfolgestaat der Sowjetunion religiös ausgerichtete Kräfte an der Regierung beteiligt. Auf Druck aus Moskau und Teheran hatte das altkommunistische Regime unter Präsident Rachmonow im vergangenen Jahr einer Regierungsbeteiligung der „Islamischen Wiedergeburt“ zugestimmt. Man hoffte, auf diese Weise das Land, das noch immer unter den Auswirkungen des Bürgerkriegs vor fünf Jahren leidet, zu befrieden und einer Radikalisierung der Opposition entgegenzuwirken. Damit sollte Tadschikistan auch weniger anfällig gegen aus dem Süden drohende Instabilität und Islamismus werden. Der tadschikische Friedensprozeß wird aber immer wieder durch bewaffnete Auseinandersetzungen gefährdet.

Schließlich vertritt Rußland auch seine Sicherheitsinteressen. Die hochgebirgige tadschikisch-afghanische Grenze wird noch immer mit Hilfe russischer Grenzsoldaten bewacht. Häufig kommt es zu Zwischenfällen mit Toten und Verletzten, vor allem mit bewaffneten Rauschgiftschmugglern. In Moskau gab am Donnerstag der Leiter der russischen Grenztruppen, Bordjusch, bekannt, man sei für den Fall vorbereitet, daß die Taliban an die Grenze vordringen und Flüchtlinge in großer Zahl über die Grenze kommen sollten. Man habe ja noch die Pläne vom vergangenen Jahr.



lich der Hauptstadt Kabul. Gerade im Norden, wo die von Iran unterstützten afghanischen Schiiten stark sind, dürfte es den sunnitischen Taliban schwer fallen, sich dauerhaft zu etablieren.

Die „großangelegte Unterstützung“ aus dem Ausland, von der in der Erklärung von Taschkent die Rede ist, erhalten die Taliban aus dem benachbarten Pakistan und aus Saudi-Arabien. Dahinter stehen nicht nur religiöse, sondern im Falle Pakistans vor allem handfeste wirtschaftliche Interessen. Es geht darum, über eine Stabilisierung der Herrschaft der Taliban ungehinderten Zugang zum zentralasiatischen Markt und zu der rohstoffreichen Region des Kaspischen Meeres zu erlangen. Angesichts der angespannten Wirtschaftslage in Pakistan könnte es Islamabad aber in Zukunft schwerer fallen, die paschtunischen Kämpfer zu unterstützen. Washington, das den Taliban anfangs positiv gegenübergestanden hatte, hält sich angesichts der dramatischen Menschenrechtsverletzungen der Islamisten nun zurück, ja wirkt geradezu hilflos in dem von einer solchen Vielzahl äußerer und innerer Faktoren bestimmten Konflikt. Vermittlungsbemühungen der Vereinten Nationen sind gescheitert.

Iran Vows Revenge for Slayings

By Mehrdad Balali

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

TEHRAN, Iran — Former Iranian president Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani vowed Friday to exact revenge for the murder of nine diplomats by the Taliban militia in Afghanistan as tens of thousands of elite Iranian troops remained on the border.

"I promise that we will take revenge for the martyrdom of your children. You will see that we will take action in time," Rafsanjani said, clutching an AK-47 machine gun as he spoke at weekly prayers at Tehran University.

But the cleric, who remains an influential figure in the regime, said Iran would not make any "rash decisions" even as the nation's elite Revolutionary Guards prepared for a new round of military exercises on the border in eastern Iran, where at least 70,000 troops are already stationed.

The Guards warned they would resort to force against the Taliban if it failed to meet Iranian demands over the diplomats, vilifying the militia as "traitors whose hands are tainted with the blood of our children."

Current President Mohammad Khatami also attacked the Taliban and said Iran would seek justice for the slain diplomats.

"Iran with a firm will will pursue this human and political catastrophe on a national and international level," Khatami said.

"The death of our innocent representatives is the outcome of Taliban's tendency for violence, savagery and ignorance," he added, quoted by the official Iranian news agency IRNA.

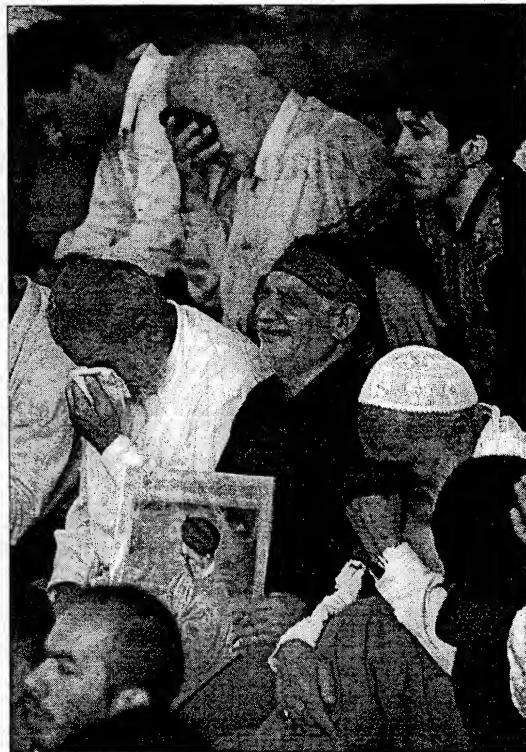
He also described the Sunni Muslim Taliban as a "rigid-minded, irrational and adventurist" movement, "which has made the oppressed people of Afghanistan a victim of its ethnic cleansing."

Independent sources said Friday that Iranian military aircraft had landed within range of advancing Taliban forces at the airport in Bamyan city, the last stronghold of the pro-Iranian Shiite community.

Observers said the aircraft could be used to evacuate Iranian consulate staff and leaders of the Shiite party.

But a spokesman for the Hezb-i-Wahdat faction said no Iranian aircraft had landed and that Taliban forces were 30 kilometers north of the city and not within striking distance of the airport.

The Taliban had appealed to the United Nations Thursday to halt Iranian "interference" in Afghanistan, including the supply of arms to pro-Ira-



Iranians at Friday prayers mourn nine diplomats killed by Afghanistan's Taliban.

nian factions through Bamyan airport.

The crisis between Shiite Muslim Iran and the rival Sunni Moslem Taliban took a dangerous turn after the militia said Thursday it had found the bodies of nine Iranian diplomats near Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan.

The Iranian foreign ministry said Friday that two diplomats had managed to escape after the Taliban's raid on the Iranian consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif, although one of them was injured.

Several hundred Iranians staged a protest against the killings after the Friday prayers, while the country's radio and television stations played sombre music ahead of three days of mourning ordered by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Tehran said it holds the Taliban and Pakistan, one of the few states to recognize the militia, responsible for the "ab-

horrent" murders.

Pakistan condemned the killing but dismissed Tehran's accusation that it was responsible and demanded the arrest and punishment of the killers.

The UN Security Council also condemned the killings and called for an urgent investigation, but also urged "maximum restraint" by all parties.

Iran is demanding that the Taliban arrest the killers and bring them to justice and also wants the return of the diplomats' bodies and the release of dozens of other Iranians held by the militia.

"Mercenaries in the Taliban group and the Pakistani army who are responsible for this inhumane crime must immediately and without wasting time respond to the demand made by our government," the Revolutionary Guards said.

Exports of Afghan-design carpets touch all time high mark

KARACHI (NNI): The exports of Afghan-design handmade carpets from Pakistan have touched all time high mark of Rs 3 billion in the 11 months of 1997-98.

In 1996-97 the exports of Afghan-style carpets, known as "Peshawar Collection" was in the range of 2.25 billion rupees, which posts an increase of 750 million during this financial year because of increasing demand of this variety all over the world, says a research report of Wool & Carpet Review magazine.

Seeing increasing demand of Afghan-style carpets almost all the major manufacturers-turned-exporters have started manufacturing these carpets in Pakistan.

Previously they were totally dependent on the Afghans manufacturers as far as the export of "Peshawar Collection" was concerned.

Now Afghan carpets exports comprise 30 per cent of the total exports of carpets from Pakistan of which 20 per cent are being knitted in Pakistan by the major manufacturers. The world wide Pakistani-made Afghan carpets include Peshawari, Kargahai, Kazakh, Harez, Serapi, Hitchlu, Turkoman,

Sehra, Beshiri, Feelpa, Khal, Mohammadi, Bluchi and Kskazi.

These carpets are being demanded by American and European importers in large quantities because of their charming and new-look modified designs which reflect the historical scenes, tribal looks and appear a totally new product.

Afghan carpets had not been unknown to Western consumers. The reason why there is such an increased demand for Afghan carpets is that these are not traditional Afghan goods. They are new products developed by the mutual combination of western importers and Pakistani manufacturers in response to the current fashion trend in the West.

The latest craze in the West is for the tribal look, with a difference. The traditional Afghan goods lack variety in design and colour. However, this variety being knitted in Pakistan use exotic fashion colours, matching the latest trends in the internal decor in the western countries. There has been lot of innovation in designs, pattern and colour that suits to consumers taste.

What is unique about the new carpets is that they subtly blend the essen-

tial tribal look with design and colours now in fashion in the west. Their prices vary over a wide range to suit the packet of buyers belonging to different groups of income.

With the diversification of local designs to Afghan-style, it is believed that the overall exports of Pakistani carpets in 1998-99 will be far better than the current financial year.

The Afghan refugees, who set up their camps in Peshawar, Hazara, Attock and Swabi, in the wake of Soviet invasion, started looking for livelihood. Some of these refugees started knitting carpets in their camps and marketed them in Pakistan. Their subtly knitted carpets attracted Pakistan as well as European and American businessmen and they placed huge orders. This trend promoted Afghan carpets exports from Pakistan during the past six to seven years. Most of the Afghan refugees have settled permanently in Pakistan and busy manufacturing carpets for local manufacturers.

Meanwhile, Pakistani manufacturers have trained their own workforce to produce new-look carpets having amalgam of Afghan-Pakistan designs, culture, colour and fashion, says the report.

780706 The Nation
Foreigners to get visit visa for Afghanistan

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - The Islamic Movement of Afghanistan, to establish its influence over the Western world, has announced issuance of visa policies and declared that they would not allow the foreigners to its controlled areas without possessing visa of its diplomats and other representatives.

A local Pushto daily through a report from Kabul on Sunday states that for issuance of visas the diplomats of Afghanistan Islamic emirate in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates are performing their duties. Similarly, it announced to open representative offices in New York and Bonn, Germany. Only three countries of the world including Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates have recognised Taliban government.

The Afghan government declared that it would not allow those foreigners in its controlled areas who get visas from the diplomats, associated with deposed Prof. Rabani government or associated with others who are still fighting against Taliban. All the foreigners who intend to visit Afghanistan must get visas from the representatives of Taliban government, it informed.

Similarly, the Afghan government had made visas compulsory for all the foreigners for visiting Afghanistan. Those who lack visa and other proper documents would get punishment according to Afghan laws.

It may be mentioned here that in previous May some Pakistani journalists without taking visas had visited Khost area of Afghanistan where they attended a Press conference of Arab billionaire Osama Bin Laden. The said Press conference resulted severe problems for the Pakistan-based Afghan diplomats.

First the Afghan Foreign Ministry Kabul asked its diplomats that why they issued visas to a large number of Pakistani journalists without taking a permission but later they became surprised that without getting visas such journalists were let by the Pakistani authorities for entering into Afghanistan. However, the journalists were helped and sponsored by the secret agency dealing the affairs of Afghanistan of visiting Khost and holding a meeting with Osama Bin Laden. In this connection, the Afghan government had reportedly lodged a complaint with the Pakistani authorities.

2.6 million Afghans are still refugees

News 980701
GENEVA: Some 2.6 million Afghans remain refugees in Pakistan and Iran where they urgently need humanitarian aid, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said Tuesday.

It is the 18th consecutive year that Afghanistan has been the country with the largest number of refugees, UNHCR chief Sadako Ogata said, as she launched an appeal for more funds to help repatriate Afghans living abroad.

An estimated 1.2 million Afghans remain in Pakistan, and 1.4 million in Iran, according to the UNHCR, with hundreds of thousands in former Soviet republics. The high levels exist despite the return of four million people since the conflict began in 1979, "a record for any refugee

group since World War II," Ogata said.

Of that four million, 2.7 million returned from Pakistan and 1.3 million from Iran. However the flow of returning refugees has dropped in recent years. The UNHCR needs 21 million dollars for 1998 to improve the infrastructure in the regions where the refugees could return, but has received only 4.5 million dollars from donor countries.

"There are many adult refugees who have never set eyes on their home villages," said Jacques Mouchet, UNHCR representative in Pakistan. The UNHCR fears entire communities will be unable to return if the older members who know how to farm the inhospitable Hindu Kush region die off. — AFP

As part of a continued initiative to bring the war-torn Afghan capital to congregational prayer, the hardline Muslim militia's mouthpiece said the violators' shops would be shut down for five days. The punishments -- a quick lashing with a rubber hose or leather strap -- were meted out by mobile anti-vice patrols, from the ministry for the fostering of virtue and suppression of vice, detained 22 men for "un-Islamic" appearance, and a further nine whose beards had been trimmed.

KABUL: Taliban inspection squads have meted out on-the-spot beatings to 31 men violating beard and clothing rules in the Afghan capital, state radio said Thursday.

Radio Shariat said mobile patrols, from the ministry for the fostering of virtue and prevention of vice, detained 22 men for "un-Islamic" appearance, and a further nine whose beards had been trimmed.

Punishment from the anti-vice patrols, which cruise the city in four wheel drive pick-ups packed with Taliban soldiers, usually entails a quick beating with a rubber hose or leather strap. — AFP/APP

Prayer-time traders punished in Kabul 980706

KABUL (AFP) - Twenty shopkeepers caught selling their wares and not offering worship, during official prayer time have been beaten and had their shops closed down for five days, Taliban radio said Sunday.

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Taliban punish traders not offering prayers

KABUL: Twenty shopkeepers caught selling their wares, and not offering prayers, during official prayer time have been beaten and had their shops closed down for five days, Taliban radio said Sunday.

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News 980706

News 980709

Taliban order

throwing out of TVs, videos, dish-antennae

KABUL: Residents of war-torn Afghanistan have been ordered to throw out their televisions, videos and satellite dishes in a fresh crackdown by religious police, Taliban radio declared Wednesday.

Citing a militia assertion that "film and music leads to moral corruption," Radio Shariat said residents have just two weeks to comply with the order to turf out the un-Islamic items.

It said the order had been issued by the militia's powerful ministry for the fostering of virtue and suppression of vice, who will set about destroying captured televisions when the two-week amnesty ends.

Hundreds of residents in Kabul — which the Taliban captured nearly two years ago — still secretly watch television through makeshift satellite dishes made from bicycle wheels, electrical fans or copper cooking pots.

Hindi musicals on video tape are also a popular diversion from the militia's puritanical Islamic state and are exchanged between trusted neighbours. However the Taliban's tight rulings over the possession of a television do not appear to extend to hundreds of traders here, who fly in thousands of sets every month from the Gulf states and smuggle them to Pakistan.—AP

Taliban teams testing prayers of Kabul Muslims

News 980709

KABUL: Teams of Taliban fighters took to the streets of the Afghan capital Wednesday making sure its weary residents knew how to say their prayers, an AFP reporter saw.

Puritanical Muslim fighters armed with rubber hoses and leather straps sealed off a major road intersection checking the accuracy of Quranic recitation as well as making routine inspections of beards that all men are required to sport.

One passing cyclist was seen being dealt a blow for failing to read a passage from the Quran, a failure likely to be widespread in a country where only 30 per cent of the population are literate.

The afternoon blockade forced hundreds of cars, cyclists and pedestrians to make a four kilometre detour around Kabul's pot-holed back streets to avoid the religious inspection. Inspectors said they were unwilling to announce how many passers by had been punished, but the figure is likely to be high given

the scale of the operation.

Residents said the prayer testing drive has also been in force in other parts of the city since the initiative of Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar was announced on national radio nearly two weeks ago. Although the announcement ordered teams from the ministry for the fostering of virtue and suppression of vice to test people's knowledge of Quranic prayers, examiners were told to "refrain from disgracing and subjecting people to humiliation."

In the past week religious police teams operating in the once-liberal Kabul have stepped up punishment of men with inadequate beards, shopkeepers trading during prayer time and residents sporting western clothing or stylish haircuts.

The Taliban seized Kabul nearly two years ago and hold around two thirds of the country. The Islamic militia of religious students claim they have the world's purest Islamic state.—AFP

Ex-minister of Afghanistan assassinated

From AMANULLAH

QUETTA - Afghanistan's former defence minister of Najibullah regime Nazer Muhammad was shot dead by unknown assailants here Thursday.

According to details Nazer Muhammad was sitting in a shop in Satellite Town when unidentified armed men opened fire killing him on the spot.

The son of late Afghanistan defence minister Musa Khan said that the cause behind the killing is political one.

The Saddar police station has registered an FIR against two officials of Afghan consulate and incharge of Taliban at Quetta on the report of Maulvi Mohsin teacher at Salfiya madarassa.

The police sources, while confirming registration of FIR, said that Maulvi Mohsin, who had been kidnapped by the armed men of Taliban on June 3 and later released him on July 4, had nominated Abdullah Hammad and Hamidullah diplomats at Afghan consulate and Maulvi Qudratullah incharge of Taliban at Quetta for kidnapping.

News 980712

Taliban capture Qaiser district in Faryab

Foreign aid staff narrowly escape Kabul rocket attack

KABUL: Foreign aid staff preparing to board a United Nations plane narrowly escaped death or serious injury early Thursday when a rocket crashed into the Taliban-held capital Kabul's airport, an AFP reporter witnessed.

Ten foreign aid workers, local UN staff and the two pilots dashed for cover when the rocket, believed to have been fired by anti-Taliban forces north of the capital, exploded 800 meters from the twin-prop plane.

"We were very lucky that the rocket hit soft ground and most of the blast and shrapnel was absorbed," explained Tahsin Disbudak, a UN landmines expert also forced to scramble for cover.

There were no casualties from the attack, which also narrowly missed a Ariana Afghan airlines Boeing 727 parked close to the dilapidated terminal building and set on fire a large patch of scrub land next to the runway. The Danish air crew of the plane bound for Islamabad said falling red-hot shrapnel had

not hit the aircraft, which is supposed to be guaranteed a 'safe window' to fly in and out of the capital by the warring factions.

A UN official at the scene complained that the attack signalled "severe contempt" for the security of UN operations in the country, while the pilots added that the future of aid flights into the city were in the balance. "That was just too close for comfort," said Save the Children official Kurt Tjoossem.

Two rockets also slammed into the military-civilian airport late Wednesday, but officials said there was neither damage nor casualties. Officials here say the rockets are fired by ousted Kabul government troops, loyal to commander Ahmad Shah Masood on frontlines only 25 kilometers (15 miles) north of the city.

The hardline Muslim Taliban have failed to dislodge Masood's fighters from the plains north of the city since they rolled into the shattered capital nearly two years ago.—AFP

ISLAMABAD: Afghanistan's Taliban Islamic militia have launched major new offensives against Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam in the northwestern province of Faryab, the Afghan Islamic Press reported Saturday.

The Pakistan-based agency said the militia had broken through the opposition front lines and captured Qaiser district after fierce fighting which started late Friday.

There was no independent confirmation of the report, which said the fighting continued on Saturday around Almar, 25 kilometers northwest of the provincial capital Maimana.

The agency said 16 Dostam troops and five Taliban soldiers had been killed.

The Taliban's objective was to advance towards Maimana.

Dostam's faction is part of an opposition alliance which includes former Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani and some other groups.

The alliance hold several northern provinces while the Taliban controls two thirds of Afghanistan including the capital Kabul.—AFP

3 murderers publicly executed in Kabul

KABUL: Pleas for forgiveness were ignored Friday when three convicted murderers were executed in a football field in the Afghan capital by family members of the men they killed.

Before the three men, Mohammed Zabair, Ismaray and Mohammed Hashim, were shot they begged for mercy. Their wives and children also pleaded with the family members of their victims to spare their lives.

A Saudi Arabian diplomat, who attended the execution, offered to pay dhs 6,500 to the victims' families, but they declined.

The three men were shot to death. They had been found guilty of ambushing and killing three men one year earlier near Ghorband, some 60 kilometres north of the city.

The Taliban religious army conducts public punishments almost every week.—AP

Taliban gain more ground in northern Afghanistan

KABUL (AFP) - Taliban forces have secured a major foothold in northern Afghanistan in a fresh bid to extend their hardline Islamic rule over opposition territory, independent sources said Monday.

Following a blistering attack and the exploitation of differences in the ranks of the rival coalition, Taliban troops have taken control of most of the northwestern province of Faryab.

Western aid workers said the Taliban had met little resistance in taking the Faryab's provincial capital Maimana on Sunday.

"The Taliban entered Maimana without much of a fight and continued their advance straight away," an independent source in the area told AFP.

A Taliban official confirmed the militia had advanced 30 kilometers (18 miles) north of Maimana, therefore capturing the bulk of the province from opposition warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam, a former communist ethnic Uzbek and key ally in the anti-Taliban alliance.

Speaking by satellite telephone, spokesman Mullah Abdul Hai said resistance was still being met in-

side Faryab and revealed the militia had yet to take control of Andkhoi, an important market town in the north of the province, close to the border with Turkmenistan.

Military analysts here have described the gains made in just three days of fighting as highly strategic, with the Taliban securing the use of an airstrip in Maimana that could prove critical in aiding further advances.

Only 40 kilometers (25 miles) from their current position is Dostam's key base at Shiberghan, and a further 100 kilometers (60 miles) east is Mazar-i-Sharif, the prize of the north and the only Afghan city outside Taliban hands.

The city is controlled by a spectrum of anti-Taliban factions, who have in the past year fought dozens of bitter and heavy clashes in the city. However it was reported to be generally calm early Monday.

Another western source, who requested not to be identified, said the Taliban's rapid advance was set about by the defection of several powerful Dostam loyalists to the Islamic militia's ranks.

"Once they had broken the main frontline by striking a deal, there was nothing to stop them taking the rest of the province," the source explained.

Taliban-run Radio Shariat said the advancing militia had captured 100 tanks, 800 prisoners and thousands of light and heavy weapons in their sweeping advance.

However, Taliban officials were tight-lipped over the militia's plans, and said the student movement was busy consolidating their positions, with battle-veteran and interior minister Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa heading the operation.

"The next move depends on the leadership, and of course its success depends on God the almighty," deputy information minister Mawlawi Abdurrahman Hotaki said.

In May, last year the Taliban entered Mazar-i-Sharif following a short-lived defection by a Dostam rival from Faryab, General Abdul Malik, but when the deal broke down the militia were beaten out and suffered heavy losses.

Their second attempt to grab the city last September also failed.

UNSC urges end to arms supply to Afghan rivals

News 980715

UNITED NATIONS: The UN Security Council condemned Tuesday the military aid provided by foreign countries to the ruling Taliban in Afghanistan and to the shaky alliance fighting it.

In a presidential statement adopted unanimously, the 15 Security Council members asked neighboring countries to terminate their support "immediately."

"The Security Council deplores the fact that military support, including the supplies of arms and other related (materials), from outside Afghanistan to the warring factions continues unabated" despite repeated appeals from the United Nations, the declaration says.

"It reiterates its call to all states, in particular those in the region, to cease such interference immediately."

The specific countries targeted by the statement were not named, but Pakistan is considered to be the main supporter of the Taliban, the religious militia that controls two-thirds of the country.

The Taliban accuse Iran and Uzbekistan of providing military and financial aid to the northern alliance.

The UN special envoy to the region, Lakhdar Brahimi, briefed the council on the latest developments in Afghanistan, where in recent days the Taliban has been conducting a big military offensive in the northeast of the country.—AFP

Taliban edicts draw condemnation from EU

FP 980718
UNITED NATIONS (AP) - International aid organizations are drafting a letter to Afghanistan's Taliban rulers explaining why they cannot work effectively under the hard-line religious government's growing list of edicts, sources said.

The draft, still in its early stages, was to be sent to Taliban authorities before a Sunday deadline requiring aid workers to begin moving into abandoned university dormitories on the outskirts of Kabul, the sources said on condition of anonymity.

Twenty-one organizations were working on the draft, but it wasn't known if all would approve it. Groups that work in Afghanistan include Oxfam, Doctors Without Borders and Care International.

Aid groups have protested the relocation order and some have threatened to leave the capital, Kabul. The European Union, Afghanistan's largest donor, funnels money through the aid groups and has warned Taliban authorities against enforcing the edict.

The former seminarians have imposed a harsh version of Islamic rule in the 85 percent of the country they control. The edicts bar girls from schools and keep women from the workplace. Men are beaten if they shave or refuse to wear a head covering.

The Taliban have said it wanted to relocate the aid workers to the

dormitories for their safety, but the aid organizations contend that being housed together actually presents a security risk by making them easy targets.

U.N. agencies are not subject to the relocation order, but the chief U.N. envoy to the country, Lakhdar Brahimi, said Tuesday that the United Nations was coming under increasing pressure from donors to withdraw its 60 international workers from the country.

Despite strained relations, U.N. and Taliban officials began talks this week on implementing some aspects of a May agreement on humanitarian aid.

"There has been no major change, but there has been progress in that the Taliban has learned that they have to come to terms with the international community," Alfredo Witschi-Cestari, the U.N. coordinator for humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, said in an interview here.

The Taliban's U.S. representative, Noorullah Zadran, said the Taliban was also growing impatient with the United Nations over a crop substitution program to reduce poppy production in the country.

Of a drs 16 million U.N. budget, only drs 1.8 was designated for a program near Jalalabad and drs 3.8 for one near Helman. The remaining drs 11 went for administrative costs, he said.

Repatriation of Afghan refugees continues

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR - The repatriation of Afghan refugees continued as another 95 families from various refugee camps in Pakistan have been returned to Azro Afghanistan.

According to the UN weekly update, the UNHCR Kabul has awarded a shelter project for 65 returnee families in Musai of Logar province to facilitate their reintegration while WHO provided 10,000 family sized bednets to control Leshmaniasis in Kabul. More than one million Afghans will need international food aid over the next year.

FAO and WFP estimate this year's cereal production at 3,854,000 tonnes which include 2834 tonnes of wheat. This is five per cent more from the last

year harvest and the best since the last peacetime harvest in 1978. However, the country will still need to import 740,000 tonnes of wheat and milled rice to meet emergency food aid needs.

WFP distributed 78 tonnes of wheat to 9500 vulnerable people in Sheikah Ali district of Hazarajat Parwan Prov. inc. Although the first convoy of wheat from Hariton got through with 85 tonnes of wheat, the second was lost of 24 tonnes. Identification and verification of food aid beneficiaries are undertaken in Sharistan, Uruzgan where 153 tonnes of flour have been pre-arranged for distribution.

FAO also sent 50,000 doses of entoxetamine, 100,000 of anthrax and 20,000 of Black quarters of VFTJs of Bamyan.

UN, ICRC emergency Afghan earthquake operation ends

News 980721

ISLAMABAD (APP) - The United Nations and the International Committee for the Red Cross have completed their emergency operation in response to the May 30 earthquake in Northeastern Afghanistan.

International agencies, coordinated by the UN, have now begun a rehabilitation phase aimed at providing enough housing assistance so that the 167,000 earthquake victims can secure shelter before winter arrives.

However, at least 30 villages on the more heavily damaged east side of the earthquake zone in Badakshan Province are inaccessible by road, and the UN estimates that at least \$1 million is needed to help them to survive the winter.

The earthquake, which measured 6.9 on the Richter scale and was the second to hit the area this year, killed some 4,000 people, destroyed 17,000 houses and affected 127 villages.

Over the past six weeks, the UN and ICRC delivered 1,500 metric tons of

food aid-mostly provided by the UN World Food Programme, enough to last family for one month. They also distributed 17,000 tents and tarpaulins and 76,000 blankets, as well as cooking and washing implements, soaps, used clothes and plastic sheeting.

A dozen helicopters, several cargo planes, 2,000 donkeys and several locally-hired trucks distributed aid which was flown or trucked from Tajikistan and Pakistan.

Several dozen injured people were evacuated to hospitals in Faizabad and Rustaq in the early days of the operation. Non-government organisations have also offered help to the affected population to avert disease.

UN emergency operation leader Eliana Duthoit said that while not every family has been reached, the major emergency needs of the population have been met.

She expressed concern, however, that the international agencies which will assist the population in rebuild-

ing do not have the resources or logistical needs to reach the 30 more isolated villages in the mountainous Shar-I-Buzurg district of Badakshan.

UN officials are concerned that if a major part of the population fails to get adequate aid, villagers could leave the area in masses, and tensions could build in the mountainous region, under nominal control of the opposition Northern Alliance.

The UN spent \$2.6 million on the emergency operation—half the funds remained from the February earthquake and half were voluntary donations pledged immediately after the May episode.

A \$6.8 million emergency appeal launched in June, however, failed to elicit any response.

The World Food Programme is in the process of positioning 2,500 metric tons of wheat in order to help 10,000 families rebuild homes through food-for-work—mostly on the western side of the earthquake zone.

God and UN to aid Afghanistan, say Taliban

News 980723

UN accedes to women's 'gradual access' to health, education

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban on Wednesday tried to calm fears of an aid shortage in the Afghan capital following its closure of foreign aid missions, promising that God and the United Nations will provide.

In a special announcement, state-run Radio Shariat told Kabul's war-weary residents that the Muslim militia enjoyed full United Nations support despite its expulsion of non-governmental aid groups.

"Firstly, God the Almighty is our absolute provider and He is the only solution for all problems," the announcement declared. "God is with us in this ordeal. Secondly, the biggest source of relief to the needy is the United Nations and they are in full understanding with the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan," it noted.

The announcement said the UN's humanitarian agencies will "offer immediate cooperation in filling the vacuum created by the pullout of some institutions" including taking over food distribution to widows and the disabled.

On Wednesday the UN announced that it intends to remain in Kabul, but sources in New York said there may be some reduction in its presence in Kabul "out of solidarity" with the other relief agencies.

Around 20 NGOs were forced out of Kabul on Monday and Tuesday

after they defied an order to relocate residences and offices to Kabul's isolated and dilapidated polytechnic institute. On Monday militia patrols raided aid offices, expelling several aid workers and sealing offices.

Groups closed down include Action Against Hunger, Médecins Sans Frontières, Save the Children, Care, Médecins du Monde and Solidarités. Many are regular vocal critics of the past two years of Taliban rule in Kabul, including the militia's ban on work and education for women and restrictions on women's access to humanitarian aid.

In two weeks the number of expatriates in Kabul has fallen from more than 200 to around 45. Four more aid workers quit the capital early Wednesday. Radio Shariat also said the militia intended to continue attempting to relocate remaining foreign offices to the polytechnic, which has no water, electricity or windows. "We are committed to fulfil this task and we will make no exceptions for anybody," it asserted.

It said the UN had first to fulfil a promise to shift its offices from Pakistan to Kabul and had therefore been given "extra time." However the report made no mention of the Red Cross.

In May the UN made a deal with the Taliban, which several aid agencies say opened the door for the ex-

pulsion of foreign NGOs. In the memorandum of understanding, the world body accepted the principle of relocation, militia vetting of local staff, and in a controversial clause agreed that female access to health and education will "need to be gradual."

Expelled groups have urged the UN now to adopt a strong and principled approach in all dealings with the militia. Diplomatic sources say all eyes will be on how the world body conducts itself with the militia and how it attempts to clean up an image of inconsistency.

With the exception of mine clearance and urban rehabilitation programmes, aid experts say the UN has seldom proved an effective implementing body. Also unclear is how much in donor funds will be available following the European Commission's decision to suspend funding for projects in Kabul.

Radio Shariat also broadcast a speech by Taliban number-two Mullah Mohammad Rabbani, accusing "certain circles" of trying to popularise Christianity in Afghanistan. "The enemies of Islam are treacherously trying to set Muslims against each other and to manipulate their confrontation in their own interests," Rabbani was quoted as saying. The speech concluded that anti-Muslim efforts were now "doomed to failure." It did not elaborate.—AFP

Taliban Islamise constitution

FP 980720
KABUL (AFP) - The purist Muslim Taliban declared Sunday the deletion of all secular terms from Afghanistan's constitution and applicable laws to bring their administration fully in line with Islamic law.

"After a full assessment, the council endorsed articles which were in conformity with Islamic Shariat (law), and amended and dropped other articles which were against the Shariat," Taliban radio Shariat announced.

It said Afghanistan's constitution had been changed to be based on Islamic law, but did not specify which of the country's variety of past secular constitutions the latest emerged from.

"All the laws and regulations applicable in the ministries, independent departments and organs were revised and repaired," the report said.

"All the non-Sharia and secular items were dropped as per an order of His Eminence (Taliban leader) Amir-ul-Momenin," it added.

A large team of senior religious scholars, ordered by Taliban chief Mullah Mohammad Omar, toiled for two weeks on the task, the station reported.

They concluded their council Saturday with a suspension of Afghanistan's civil code, due to "reservations in view of the Sharia," and replaced it with a Sunni Muslim book.

Officials here said the new legal statutes, civil code and constitution were as yet not publicly available as they had yet to receive the final stamp of approval from the reclusive Omar.

Last year Omar declared himself Amir of the dusty war-torn and landlocked state, now called an Emirate.

Meanwhile the militia's official paper -- called Shariat weekly -- slammed other Muslim countries for having secular constitutions.

"The identity and reality of the political systems and governments are judged by the laws ruling them," Shariat said in a front-page editorial.

No compromise stance against NGOs over NGOs: Taliban

KABUL (AFP) - A senior Taliban official on Saturday said foreign aid groups expelled from the Afghan capital were welcome to return but only under stiff terms set out by the hardline militia.

"We are of course willing to negotiate with the NGO's as we are always open to talking, but we will not change our position," planning minister Qari Din Mohammad said.

He said the twenty groups forced out of the city could return if they finally agree to relocate their residences and offices to the city's dilapidated polytechnic.

The official also said all aid agencies would also have to sign formal protocol with the puritanical Moslem militia.

He said these protocols governing aid agency operations had already been prepared and would also be above any discussion.

"If the NGO's want to come back they can follow our rules. Otherwise they can stay out," Mohammad asserted.

The minister also threw aside concerns of increasing hardship in the Afghan capital following

Monday and Tuesday's mass exodus of aid workers, once again asserting that "God is the greatest provider."

The crisis erupted when the Taliban gave foreign aid groups an ultimatum to relocate offices and residences, the culmination of two years of tight restrictions on aid delivery following the Taliban takeover of the city.

Following the refusal of most aid groups to show any willingness to shift, the Taliban raided offices and expelled foreign aid staff, excluding UN and International Red Cross staff.

Most foreign aid workers say they have no doubt the ultimatum was little more than an indirect expulsion order, aimed at a community highly critical of the Moslem militia's policies banning work and education for women and restricting female access to health care.

Large areas of Kabul have already felt the impact of the pull-out, with tens of thousands of residents without running water and medical staff facing a future of no salaries.

PESHAWAR: PPP leader and former interior minister Maj Gen (Retd) Naseerullah Babar has supported the Taliban decision not to succumb to the pressure by NGOs working in Kabul and said they were justified in taking decisions to uphold Afghanistan's sovereignty.

In a statement he alleged that the NGOs, mostly Western, spent almost 80 per cent of their budget on staff salaries, luxury vehicles, bungalows and other non-productive activities. He said the so-called aid workers live in posh localities like University Town in Peshawar and Shehr-i-Nau and Wazir Akbar Khan in Kabul and often failed to respect the cultural and religious sensitivities of the Afghans. Moreover, he accused them of challenging the Taliban right to frame rules and policies for their country.

Gen Babar, who has closely been associated with Afghanistan since 1970s, is probably the first Pakistani to have raised his voice in favour of the Taliban in their tussle with the arm-twisting Western NGOs. He claimed the NGOs and foreign donors had yet to provide assistance for repairing the Kajaki dam in Helmand province and fund other vital projects that could bring substantial improvements in the life of the Afghans. He demanded a report on the money spent by the NGOs and other agencies on actual development work in

Afghanistan along with that spent on staff salaries and perks.

The former interior minister was critical of those Pakistanis, including the press, which was urging the Taliban to make compromises on the NGOs question. "Aid is an opiate. Remember the droppings of food in the former East Pakistan during the cyclones in 1970s. Creating dependence among the people is an unwise policy. We in Pakistan have already lost our sovereignty by depending too much on foreign assistance and handouts. Don't force the Taliban and the freedom-loving Afghans to accept small amounts of conditional assistance on terms that could jeopardise Afghanistan's sovereignty," he stressed.

Meanwhile the former interior minister in another statement said the Wapda had quietly added another surcharge of 13 per cent on electricity bills without making any announcement in this respect.

He claimed that the surcharge would be included in the monthly bills for July. He said consumers would now have to pay an extra Rs 80 if their monthly bill was for Rs 500.

Gen Babar criticised the government for effecting increase in electricity charges without informing consumers and making a formal

UN to suspend all but life-saving aid in Kabul

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) - The United Nations on Wednesday announced the suspension of all but "life-saving assistance" in Kabul to protest Taliban measures against foreign relief workers.

Speaking at a news conference, UN humanitarian coordinator Sergio Vieira de Mello announced that "UN assistance in Kabul will be cut down and restricted to life-saving assistance only."

Giving details, he said that the United Nations would suspend additional rehabilitation programs and cut down assistance to food supplies, health support and a safe drinking water supply.

The measures were prompted by the Taliban's expulsion of non-government organizations (NGOs) that provided 70-80 percent of the aid to the Afghan capital's one million residents, in collaboration with UN agencies.

"UN aid may have to be further restricted if there is no progress within a reasonable timeframe on the range of differences that we now have with the authorities," De Mello also warned.

De Mello said he would set a specific deadline for obtaining "tangible and measurable" progress.

progress with the Taliban, whose strict implementation of Islamic law has drawn widespread international condemnation.

The Islamic militia who control two-thirds of Afghanistan have notably instituted a ban on work and aid distribution for women and set restrictions on women's access to humanitarian aid.

Around 20 NGOs were forced out of Kabul on Monday and Tuesday after they defied an order to relocate residences and offices to Kabul's isolated and dilapidated polytechnic, which according to De Mello would require one million dollars to rehabilitate.

In two weeks the number of expatriates in Kabul has fallen from more than 200 to around 45. Four more aid workers quit the capital early Wednesday. The United Nations currently has 12 foreign staff in Kabul.

De Mello informed the UN Security Council on Tuesday that he would review policy at the end of next month, according to western diplomats at the closed-door meeting.

De Mello concluded that Afghanistan was "probably the most difficult place on earth to work."

But on Wednesday, he declined to mention a specific deadline, saying: "I can assure you it will be

announced. He said the government was telling lies when it announced that there would be no mini-budget and utility bills would not be raised.

Taliban capture key base in Jowzjan province

Nation 580803

KABUL (AFP) - The Taliban militia on Sunday captured the key opposition base of Sheberghan in northern Afghanistan, officials and independent sources told AFP.

A Taliban official said the Taliban forces were busy consolidating positions inside the native base of opposition warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum, threatening the only Afghan city out of their hands.

'We are in full control of Sheberghan and are digging in,' said Abdul Hai Mutmaen in a telephone interview from the militia's southern stronghold of Kandahar.

'The opposition pulled out and set fire to their jets at the airbase, but we are not currently engaging them on a clear frontline because they have been scattered,' he added. An official spokesman for Taliban told AFP the defences of troops loyal to Dostum collapsed following overnight fighting between the two sides. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said they had used a pre-planned flight to pull-out foreigners from the dusty anti-Taliban capital of Mazar-i-Sharif, situated 120 kilometers east of Sheberghan.

'According to information we have received Sheberghan has fallen to the Taliban and as a result we were requested to airlift out some non-ICRC expatriates from Mazar-i-Sharif,' spokesman Juan Martinez said.

Quoting travellers reports, independent sources in the area said heavy fighting was reported to be closing in with Sheberghan 'on the verge of collapse' by the early hours of Sunday.

Radio Iran also announced that Tehran has evacuated staff from its mission in northern Afghanistan in the wake of the offensive, saying an unspecified number of diplomats were on their way home. As well as knocking out Dostum's base for his depleted army and aged airforce, the Taliban advance into Sheberghan — the capital of the relatively unexploited oil and gas rich Jowzjan province — poses a major threat to Mazar-i-Sharif, home of the fractured anti-Taliban alliance.

It also represents a personal blow to the ethnic-Uzbek Dostum, who emerged from humble beginnings in his native Sherberghan as a pipe-fitter to find power as a pro-communist and then self-styled Islamic warlord.

The militia also claimed the capture of the market town of Andkhoi on route to Sheberghan, therefore cutting a key trade route between opposition-held northern Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. Although the seat of government of the anti-Taliban alliance, Mazar-i-Sharif frequently erupts into inter-factional fighting and most aid groups — including even the ICRC — had already suspended regular operations there in protest at the regular bouts of looting and attacks on foreign offices.

The attack on the north follows Taliban advances into the northwest of the country last month, when the militia captured the town of Maimana, the capital of Faryab province.

Militia sources here, who requested not to be identified, said Maimana's mud airstrip was now in full use for flying in reinforcements from the two-thirds of the country the militia hold.

Hit by internal differences, the anti-Taliban alliance failed to dislodge their rivals despite reports that the Taliban's supply lines were over extended.

However two successive attempts by the Taliban last year to seize the north of the country have met with a determined defence by opposition troops, costing the militia heavy casualties.

The anti-Taliban alliance includes Dostum, the UN-recognised government of former President Burhanuddin Rabbani beaten out of Kabul by the Taliban nearly two years ago, and the Hezb-i-Wahdat.

Our Peshawar Correspondent adds: The Peshawar-based Afghan diplomats have confirmed capturing of Jozjan, home province of Afghan war lord Gen. Dostum, by the soldiers of Taliban on Sunday and now they are advancing towards other northern provinces. The latest reports in the evening said that people from two districts of each Balkh and Samangan provinces have announced joining of Taliban. Peshawar based vice

Afghan Consul General Wali Naeemi remarked when contacted by The Nation. He added that there are conflicting reports about war lord Gen. Rashid Dostum. He said that after sustaining injuries, Rashid Dostum escaped to Termiz city of neighbour Uzbekistan which is around 70 kilometers away from Mazar Sharif. But the Sahaar News Agency said nothing about injuries sustained by Rashid Dostum. Wali Naeemi informed that fighting between the soldiers loyal to Islamic Movement and soldiers loyal to Rashid Dostum was started in early hours of Sunday at

around 4.00 am and the Islamic movement soldiers entered Shabarghan, headquarter of Jozjan province at around 11.00 am. He said that soldiers loyal to Rashid Dostum who were badly moralised since fall of Faryab province in previous July have left the city vacant for Taliban. He added that soldiers of the northern alliance were surrendered before Taliban when Rashid Dostum left the city for unknown place.

Soon after entering Shabarghan town, Wali Naeemi said that Taliban leaders had constituted a committee for restoration of peace and authority. He said that now the Taliban leaders are disarming the civilians and establishing contacts with the elders to declare their sympathies with the Islamic government. He quoting the Taliban leaders said that their first priority is to ensure protection to common people.

No one is sure about the human and property losses between the rival faction's renewed fighting in Jozjan province but it came to know that a large number of Rashid Dostum soldiers were killed or injured. The Taliban have also claimed arresting of a large number of Rashid Dostum soldiers.

The Peshawar-based vice Afghan Consul further said that Amir Jan an influential commander of Rashid Dostum's Junbush was defected to Taliban and with his support Taliban have also established their control over two districts Chamtal and Charmolak of Balkh province. He said that two districts of Samangan province were also fell to Taliban. He was of the firm belief that Taliban likely to establish their control over Mazar-i-Sharif in coming few days. The Sahaar News Agency informed that before vacating Shabarghan town, the Dostum loyal forces have set on fire the airport. The Shabarghan airport was too much rich like of Panjsher in dumps of sophisticated arms and planes, gifted by the former Soviet Union to Afghanistan in the last two decades.

Afghani appreciates as Taliban make advances

News 980805

By Ismail Khan

PESHAWAR: The Afghani shot up in the local currency exchange market here Tuesday as the Taliban Islamic militia gained new ground in the latest string of military victories in northern Afghanistan, currency dealers here said.

Afghanistan's national currency jump-rose from Rs 134 (\$ 2.73) for 100,000 Afghanis to Rs 155 (\$2.44), gaining Rs 16 in value as reports of Taliban making further advances up in the north trickled.

The Islamic militia in a blitzkrieg military action captured Shiberghan, capital of Jauzjan province and reached within a striking range of Mazar-i-Sharif, the last bastion of the opposition Northern Alliance. "Shiberghan was a strong and important opposition stronghold and its fall to the Taliban naturally would have

beefed up the value of the Afghani," said Engr Shakir, an Afghan currency dealer at Peshawar's main foreign currency exchange market.

He said that trading in Afghanis remained feverish throughout the day as billions of Afghanis changed hands. "There has been more buying than selling. Money changers are holding on to the Afghanis in speculation of the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif," Shakir said.

100,000 Afghanis, he recalled, were traded for Rs 130 just before the fall of Maimana, the capital of northern Faryab province to the Taliban. The value of Afghani has been showing increase since then, he added.

In Quetta, 100,000 Afghanis were traded for Rs 150, five rupees less than Peshawar. "Money changers are less enthusiastic in Quetta," he remarked. While reports from Kabul and Jalalabad, the provincial capital

of eastern Nangarhar province bordering Pakistan, said 100,000 Afghanis were traded for Rs 145. "Kabul has always been less feverish," informed Shakir, who said he had been doing the same business in the Afghan capital before migrating to Pakistan 20 years ago.

Through a strange mechanism, the money changers dealing in Afghan currency link the Afghanis with one or the other belligerent groups in Afghanistan and then allow its value to move up and down according to the military gains and losses. By the same yardstick, the money changers have been betting their money on the Taliban ever since they rose to the limelight in September 1994. Many of the money changers went broke when the Taliban tasted humiliating defeat in Mazar-i-Sharif and retreated after suffering heavy casualties last year.

Afghan rivals make conflicting claims

News 980807

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: The Taliban and their rival Northern Alliance made conflicting claims about military gains in northern Afghanistan as fighting subsided in most frontlines Thursday.

One of the claims made by the Northern Alliance was that it had shot down a Taliban jet fighter which was bombing Takhar province Thursday. It said the Russian-built SU-22 aircraft fell in Badakhshan province after being hit and its pilot, Naqibullah, was arrested after ejecting safely.

Earlier, the Northern Alliance claimed that its forces had recaptured Barqa in Baghlan province and Balkh district near Mazar-i-Sharif after successful military offensives. It also claimed that Saripul province was still in control of the Northern Alliance. Most of these claims were made on Radio Tehran, which gives so much coverage to the Northern Alliance that it appears at times to be a mouthpiece of the alliance.

All these claims were refuted by

the Taliban. One of their spokesmen, Mulla Abdul Hye Mutmain, said in Kandahar that attacks on Barqa and Balkh had been repulsed with heavy losses to the Northern Alliance. He maintained that Saripul town and district, which the Taliban claimed to have captured two days ago, was still in their possession.

Another Kandahar-based Taliban spokesman, Abdul Ahad Jehangirwal, said that the Taliban were flying troops and arms to Shiberghan not only from Kandahar but also from Herat, Khost and Kabul. He said about 1,000 Taliban soldiers were flown from Kandahar to Shiberghan during the last two days.

Meanwhile, the Taliban Islamic movement founder Mulla Mohammad Omar has taken exception to the claims by the anti-Taliban forces and certain journalists about the presence of Pakistani soldiers and policemen in the Taliban frontlines. In a statement from Kandahar, he reminded that nobody during the past four years was able to produce a sin-

gle proof to prove this allegation. "None could be given the right to level baseless allegations against us without offering any evidence," he stressed.

On the other hand, a Hezb-i-Wahdat military commander, Mustafa Kazmi, was quoted as saying that the Taliban jet fighters Thursday bombed the Mazar-i-Sharif airport but failed to hit any intended target.

It may be added that the ongoing fighting in northern Afghanistan started three weeks ago when the Taliban attacked and captured Maimana, capital of Faryab province, and later marched on Shiberghan, military headquarters of Gen Dos-tum. Since then, the Taliban have captured almost the whole of Faryab, Jauzjan and Saripul provinces. This is the third time in two years that the Taliban are knocking at the doors of Mazar-i-Sharif. Its earlier two attempts to take Mazar-i-Sharif and rest of northern Afghanistan, failed in the face of a determined opposition.

Taliban capture strategic Taloqan

News 980812

Heading towards Masood's military airbase at Khwajaghar; student militia claim missing Iranians are not diplomats

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: The Taliban continued their victorious march in northern Afghanistan Tuesday when they captured Taloqan, capital of Takhar province and a stronghold of former president Burhanuddin Rabbani and his defence minister Ahmad Shah Masood.

The Taliban claim of taking the town at 11 am Tuesday was later confirmed by both independent and opposition sources.

While conceding the loss of the strategically located town, a spokesman of the opposition Northern Alliance pointed out that they resisted the Taliban for nine hours. He also vowed to strike back.

was now complete.

Taliban sources in Kandahar and Peshawar said the Taliban, led by commander Mulla Mohammad Naeem, began their attack Monday night and headed for Taloqan after breaking through opposition defences at Bangi. They said troops loyal to Masood tried to put up a fight but they were soon overpowered.

Afghan sources said military commanders belonging to Gulbaddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-i-Islami and Prof Sayyaf's Ittehad-i-Islami switched sides to the Taliban to make their task easier. They in particular named Engineer Umar from Sayyaf's party as the one who defected to the Taliban and gave them safe passage at Bangi.

It was learnt that the Taliban forces in Takhar after capturing Taloqan headed for Masood's military airbase at Khwajaghar.

The Taliban also made claims about more military successes in Samangan, Baghlan, Bamiyan and Kapisa provinces.

Wali Naeemi, vice consul in the Afghan Consulate in Peshawar, claimed a number of towns and districts fell to the Taliban in these provinces without much fighting. He said local military commanders and the people invited the Taliban, surrendered their arms and volunteered their support. None of these claims could be confirmed from independent or opposition sources.

The Sahar News Agency also re-

Hekmatyar says he is alive

TEHRAN: Former Afghan prime minister Gulbaddin Hekmatyar spoke on Iranian state radio on Tuesday, contradicting rumours that he had been killed, reports AFP.

"As you hear me here today on August 11, I am not dead. The reports to the contrary are mere lies

Continued on Page 8

Earlier, sources in Rabbani's Jamiat-i-Islami in Peshawar contended that fighting was going on in

ported that lighting had been supplemented at the Bamiyan airport by the Iranians to allow landings by planes at night.

It said the extra flights were possibly bringing supplies for the Shi-ite Hezb-i-Wahdat and the Northern Alliance.

Meanwhile, a statement by the Taliban-run Afghan Foreign Ministry said in a statement Tuesday that the 11 Iranians said to be missing in Mazar-i-Sharif were never registered with it by Tehran and thus they couldn't be considered diplomats. It said if these Iranians were caught they would be tried as spies rather than treating them as diplomats. It added that the whereabouts of these Iranians were still unknown.

Earlier, the Iranian government had accused the Taliban forces of attacking their consulate in Mazar-i-Sharif and arresting and taking away its 11 diplomats. The Taliban have denied any such incidence and contended that there was nobody at the consulate when their troops arrived there. Tehran had also said it was the responsibility of the Taliban and the Pakistan government to ensure the safety and security of the diplomats.

On the other hand, the Taliban Information Minister, Muttaqi, urged the families that left Mazar-i-Sharif before and after its fall and took refuge in Pule Khumri to return to their homes as the city was now back to normal. He denied that the Taliban had harassed non-Pash-toons or Shias and stressed that the

the suburbs of Taloqan. They said the town hadn't fallen until early evening. However, subsequent developments showed that the town had indeed fallen.

Taliban Information Minister Mulla Amir Khan Muttaqi, who was part of the Taliban force which attacked Taloqan from their base in Kunduz province, said the town's defenders put up a stiff fight before fleeing. He said the Taliban were now consolidating their hold in Taloqan and had taken control of the airport, roads and intersections, and important buildings. He refuted reports that hand-to-hand fighting was going on in Taloqan and said the Taliban takeover

Taliban Islamic movement didn't believe in religious, sectarian, ethnic or linguistic discrimination.

The loss of Taloqan is being described as a big loss for Masood as it would cut off his supply lines from Tajikistan and put pressure on the defences on his remaining strongholds in Badakhshan, Parwan and Kapisa. During the past one month, the Taliban have now captured five provinces — Faryab, Jauzjan, Saripul, Balkh and now Takhar — and major cities like Mazar-i-Sharif, Maimana, Shiberghan and Taloqan.

AP adds: Iranian radio reported Tuesday the Taliban attacked the Consulate of Turkmenistan, a former Soviet Republic, in Mazar-e-Sharif and expelled its diplomats. The whereabouts of the diplomats were not immediately clear.

Iranian radio accused the Taliban of a "large-scale massacre of civilians" in Mazar-e-Sharif. Opposition have also accused the Taliban of killing civilians in its attack on Mazar-e-Sharif.

On the other hand, the Russian Foreign Ministry said Russia is ready to fortify the southern borders of former Soviet republics in Central Asia to guard against any spillover of the turmoil in neighboring Afghanistan.

The northbound advance of the Taliban movement poses "a real threat" to the coalition of former Soviet republics, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Foreign Ministry spokesman Valery Nesterushkin said.

Taliban militia captures two more strategic towns

Taliban leader rejects Russian charge of Pak military support

News 980813

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: The Taliban extended their writ to the border with Uzbekistan Wednesday by capturing the Oxus river-port town of Hairatan to deprive Uzbek warlord Gen Abdul Rashid Dostum of one of his last footholds in northern Afghanistan.

Another significant military gain for the Taliban Wednesday was the fall of the strategically located Pule Khumri town in Baghlan province. It is sited on the highway that links Uzbekistan with Kabul and Torkham via Hairatan, Mazar-i-Sharif, Doshi, Salang, Jabal-us-Siraj and Charikar.

Mulla Abdul Hye Mutmain, a Taliban spokesman in Kandahar, said Hairatan fell Wednesday morning after a brief resistance. Afghan Consul in Peshawar, Mulla Najibullah, citing reports from the Defence Min-

istry in Kabul, said the city's defenders surrendered to the Taliban who had advanced from Mazar-i-Sharif. Later, Balkh province's new Taliban Governor, Mulla Abdul Mannan Niazi, said the people of Hairatan welcomed the Taliban with open arms.

Ustad Mohaqiq, a Hezb-i-Wahdat and Northern Alliance leader, conceded the fall of Hairatan in an interview with Radio Mashhad, Iran. He also admitted the loss of Pule Khumri.

Mutmain explained that Taliban forces hadn't reached Pule Khumri themselves and the uprising in the town was indigenous and in support of the Taliban. He said the Taliban were planning to reach Pule Khumri after having consolidated their positions in the newly-acquired areas. He expressed ignorance about reports

that pro-Taliban forces had reached Khujan and Doshi and were pushing towards Salang.

Mulla Niazi also claimed the fall of Tashkurgan, a town in Samangan province, after a brief resistance. He said the Taliban had now reached the gorge Tangi Tashkurgan and were ready to march towards Aibak, capital of Samangan. Opposition leader Ustaq Mohaqiq also conceded the loss of Tashkurgan. However, he alleged that both Hairatan and Tashkurgan fell due to treachery by some of their military commanders.

Tashkurgan's fall opened up the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kunduz road and enabled the Taliban to link up their forces. They would now be better able to coordinate their military activities in northeastern Afghanistan,

where the fall of Taloqan has enabled them to head for Badakhshan province. Former president Burhanuddin Rabbani and his prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar took refuge in Badakhshan's provincial capital, Faizabad, after fleeing Taloqan Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Taliban sources also claimed that their forces had captured Nahrin and Qalagai, some other towns in Baghlan province, thereby further blocking former defence minister Ahmad Shah Masud's supply lines to his native Panjsher valley. The Taliban also insisted that they were now in complete control of Taloqan.

They said a gathering of the people and elite was held in Taloqan where full support to the Taliban and their Islamic programme was announced. A similar gathering was held in Mazar-i-Sharif to find support for the Taliban.

Meanwhile, Ustad Mohaqiq was very critical of the Taliban and the Pakistan government. He said resistance against the Taliban had started east of Mazar-i-Sharif and was spreading. He said Hezb-i-Wahdat had in its possession about 50

Pakistanis as a proof of Islamabad's involvement in Afghanistan. "Our situation is worse now than during Russian occupation because the world helped the Afghan people on that occasion. Now that Pakistan has occupied our homeland, none in the world is listening to our complaints against this injustice," he argued.

On the other hand, Gen Dostum spoke for the first time to the news media after his military defeat and told the Mashhad Radio that resistance against the Taliban had started and they had been attacked in Tangi Shadian near Mazar-i-Sharif and in Samangan province. He said Ahmad Shah Masud's forces were regrouping near Taloqan to fight against the Taliban. He also accused the Taliban of harassing the people and searching their homes in Mazar-i-Sharif.

Ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani also gave an interview to the Tehran Radio and said even after the Taliban military successes it is possible to hold talks and find a negotiated solution of the Afghan problem. He said a military solution of the conflict is unlikely to last.

Meanwhile, about 5,000 Afghan Taliban have given up their studies

in madrassas in NWFP and left for Afghanistan to reinforce the ranks of their colleagues. Mulla Abdul Qadeer, head of the Taliban representative office in Peshawar, said they were planning to send about 10,000 Afghan Taliban from Pakistan to perform administrative jobs in different parts of Afghanistan. He said Pakistani Taliban would only be sent if their parents allowed them to do so.

APP adds: Mulla Muttaqi, Information Minister of the Taliban government has categorically rejected Russia's charge about Pakistan's military support to the Taliban, reports the BBC.

According to the radio, Mulla Muttaqi said that Russia's allegations were old and were aimed at perpetuating the stay of its troops in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other Central Asian Republics (CARs).

That is why, according to him, Russia was harassing CARs that the Taliban had reached close to their borders and now they would meddle with the affairs of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. He further said that it was Russia's own game and her allegations were absolutely baseless, the radio added.

The Taliban say they know nothing about the Iranian diplomats, but claim to be holding some 30 Iranians suspected of arming the Taliban's enemies.

Iran is widely believed to have supplied arms to the anti-Taliban alliance in Afghanistan. Newspaper reports have quoted Iranian officials as saying the captured truck drivers worked for an international company transporting food to the northern city of Mazar-e-Sharif, which was captured by the Taliban on Saturday. The reports did not name the company.—AP

Taliban deny capturing or killing Iranian diplomats

Iranian envoy says mission personnel shifted to Kandahar

News 980811

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: The controversy over Iranian diplomats, allegedly arrested by Taliban from Mazar-i-Sharif, is looming large as both Afghan and Iranian ambassadors to Pakistan have made conflicting claims regarding their custody.

Maulvi Saeedur Rehman Haqqani, the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Pakistan, on Monday denied allegations that the Taliban kidnapped or killed any Iranian diplomat when they captured the city of Mazar-i-Sharif on Saturday. The Iranian envoy Akhundzade Mehdi, however, said they were flown to Taliban headquarters in Kandahar after capture from the consulate office.

Saeed said when their mujahideen took over Mazar-i-Sharif and rolled into the Iranian consulate they found no Iranian diplomat there. Even the consulate was empty with not a single person inside, Maulvi Saeedur Rehman Haqqani told a group of newsmen here at a local hotel.

The Iranian diplomats might have gone with the retreating forces when the Taliban captured the anti-Taliban stronghold, he said in response to different queries by journalists.

The Afghan ambassador also denied any support to the Taliban militia by Pakistan and said the Taliban were getting success with God's will and overwhelming support of the Afghan people. "The people of Afghanistan

are with us and they want the introduction of Islamic Sharish in the country," he said.

He said out of 32 provinces in Afghanistan, the three-fourth areas are with the Taliban government while the rest of the one-fourth could fall under the Taliban rule within a week or so. Most of the areas previously controlled by General Dostum and General Malik are with us while the fighting is on in the Bamyan province, he added.

But there is no war or skirmishes in Mazar-i-Sharif, reiterated the ambassador. He said the Taliban government believed in peace and they have always assured that they respect the rights of everybody including Tajiks, Hazaras, Kohistanis etc.

He said that the Taliban chief Amirul Momineen Maulvi Muhammad Umar Mujahid has already announced general amnesty for every one in Afghanistan which has already been broadcast through the state-run radio "Sada-i-Shariat".

In response to the Western propaganda of discriminatory attitude towards women in Afghanistan, the ambassador said that the Afghan women were very happy now with the new code of life and they felt relieved. "No Afghan woman has ever complained about the Islamic life style as they are happy because their respect and sanctity is now much secure," he said.

About women education, he said, Afghanistan is still at war and people

are talking about women's education while even the men do not find any opportunity to get education. However, he said "we in Afghanistan derive inspiration and strength from the golden principles enshrined in the Holy Quraan and Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) and we would follow whatever we have been dictated by the Quraan." He assured that there was no discrimination and everybody's rights were honoured and were treated equal before the law.

APP adds: Iran's envoy to Pakistan, Akhundzade Mehdi was in disagreement with the Afghan claims. He told the journalists that according to the latest information, the Iranian diplomats have been shifted to Kandahar from Mazar-i-Sharif and they are in custody of the Taliban.

"This is modern age. Perhaps Taliban are not aware of the latest communication technology as they hate cameras, TV and Radio. As a matter of fact, one of our diplomats was in contact with our headquarters when Taliban entered in the premises of the Iranian embassy office there."

Akhundzade demanded immediate release of the Iranian diplomats so that they could be able to perform their duties. He said, even a self-acclaimed state should respect the international law. Taliban should also understand the concern of international community over the arrest of Iranian diplomats and set them free, he added.

smuggled items like Uranium, Blueprints and Designs of sophisticated weapons, precious metals and Chemicals, used in manufacturing of Nuclear and Chemical weapons.

"An important neighbour of Afghanistan, who was vigorously trying to become a nuclear power, ran three clandestine networks for the procurement of Uranium and other fissile materials in Mazar-i-Sharif," confided a source close to the Taliban.

Other countries in the region also benefited from the trade, he added.

The first consignment of uranium reached the Pakistani tribal territory in 1996 in small tins. The same were sent to laboratory for a test by the Inter Services Intelligence which proved that the material packed in the tins had expired long before reaching Pakistan. The price of half a kilo uranium in the beginning was as high as Rs 300,000 per tin.

The tribals active in the illegal business of heavy arms and such internationally banned items had purchased kilos of uranium taking it as enriched but had to suffer huge losses. The same disappointment was faced by the ISI which thought that uranium enroute to Afghanistan would prove a blessing in disguise for a state like Pakistan.

10 The Frontier Post
Illegal uranium trade suffers in Mazar-i-Sharif

F.P. Report 980813

PESHAWAR - With the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif to Taliban, the illegal trade in Uranium and other fissile material and technology is likely to suffer, analysts said. It is to be mentioned that lately, Mazar became hub of highly costly and most sought after items, smuggled from the territory of former Soviet Union.

Now it is an open secret that the trafficking of these material did not confined to Afghanistan, the Pakistani tribal areas also witnessed the sale of such items, some years back.

After the disintegration of Soviet Union in 1991, the control mechanism over these highly dangerous material became loosened.

It leads to the leakage and subsequently to its illegal trafficking to other countries especially to its neighbouring countries. Thus being a neighbour to some of the newly-liberated Central Asian Republics and the complete lawlessness, prevailing in Afghanistan provide a conducive atmosphere for the flourishing of such businesses.

In this regard, Mazar-i-Sharif

turned into a main center for

NGOs agree to resume activities in Afghanistan

News 980813

To work from existing locations pending alternative sites

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Coordinator for Afghanistan on Wednesday announced that the international non-governmental organisations will be allowed to return to Kabul.

The decision followed negotiations between the United Nations and Taliban authorities in Kabul through a Joint Consultative Committee established earlier. The discussions will commence next week to consider all technical issues concerned with the relocation of NGO facilities in Kabul.

According to the UN officials, the substance of the agreement states:

The NGOs acknowledge the relocation order and are willing to consider the Kabul Polytechnic as a site for their offices, a commission is being established to consider all issues related to relocation, including, if necessary, the selection of alterna-

tive sites.

This commission will include three representatives of the Taliban, three representatives of NGOs, and two representatives of the United Nations (as facilitators). Its first meeting will be held on Aug 17 in Kabul.

Pending the rehabilitation of selected premises, international NGOs are authorised to resume their activities in Kabul from their existing office locations.

Both the NGOs and the Taliban representatives have committed themselves to resolving all outstanding issues by Aug 31. The NGO statutes approved by the Taliban Shura in March 1998 will be the framework for future collaboration between NGOs and Taliban authorities. Taliban authorities, through the Ministry of Planning, have committed themselves to assist the in-

ternational NGOs in the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in line with the text and spirit of this statute.

It is understood that, upon their return to Kabul, they confirm their acceptance of the NGO statute and their commitment to conduct their activities in accordance with its letter and spirit.

As a result of this agreement, many United Nations programmes that were suspended in Kabul will be able to resume as well. The United Nations is pleased that the mechanism of the Joint Consultative Committee established under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of May 13, 1998, has been able to facilitate this agreement. It will continue to work with the Taliban authorities to resolve the other issues highlighted in that agreement.—APP

Taliban tighten grip on Mazar amid concerns for HR

ISLAMABAD: A week after they seized control of the northern Afghan opposition city of Mazar-i-Sharif, a Taliban iron curtain remains firmly in place amid concerns over human rights, diplomatic sources said Saturday.

Although in the midst of their greatest victory since the capture of the capital Kabul nearly two years ago, the Taliban continue to deny access to a queue of journalists desperate to reach the north. "There are no way of knowing exactly what is going on there and access is being totally denied," the sources added.

Independent sources said one week after the rout of the opposition, residents of the city remain under virtual house arrest while house to house searches for weapons remain in progress. "Sporadic shots can be heard even

though all resistance appears to have gone," an independent source in contact with the city reported.

The sources, who cannot be identified, said they were concerned about the human rights situation in the city. "People there are very scared about how the Taliban are consolidating their rule," a humanitarian sources noted. "Unfortunately there is no way of finding out exactly what is going on."

Most concerns revolve around fears for the ethnic-Hazara Shiite Muslim population of Mazar-i-Sharif, traditionally fierce adversaries of the puritanical Sunni Muslim Taliban dominated by ethnic-Pashtuns.

Two Taliban attempts to capture the city last year were foiled by hardened street fighters of the Hezb-i-Wahdat faction, made up of ethnic-Hazara Shiites and backed by Iran. In May last year, the Taliban found themselves trapped in the city's maze of mud streets by turncoat commanders, and suffered up to 2,500 dead and thousands more taken prisoner.

In the current attempt to control

Situated only 450 kilometres north of Kabul, the only way into the city is from Taliban-held Afghanistan. Borders with Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan remain sealed by the central Asian neighbours amid fears over refugees and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism.—APP

News 980819 The Ne. Al fears mass killings by Taliban

LONDON: Amnesty International said it fears Afghanistan's Taliban Islamic militia are committing human rights abuses against ethnic groups and rounding up hundreds after recently seizing areas in the north of the country.

Amnesty International said it had received "unconfirmed but persistent reports" of mass arrests of members of non-Pashtoon ethnic groups in the north and "reports" of mass killings in the formerly northern stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif.

The Taliban, who are predominantly ethnic Pashtoons, recently seized swathes of territory in the north of Afghanistan including Mazar-i-Sharif which had been the stronghold of forces opposed to the hardline cleric-led militia.

Amnesty said the Taliban had refused entry to the town to journalists and urged their leadership to "open up the area to foreign media and independent monitors and give public account of who they have arrested and why."

Concern about Mazar-i-Sharif is just one of the fears of the human rights group has about Afghanistan. In its statement released Monday it said that "hundreds, possibly thousands of Afghans and dozens of non-Afghans" were reportedly detained in recent weeks.—APP

Taliban claim capture of another northern province

News 980816

PESHAWAR: Resuming their forward thrust after consolidating their military position in newly-captured territory in northern Afghanistan over the past few days, the Taliban Saturday claimed to have captured the strategically-located Doshi town and several districts in Baghlan, Takhar, Samangan and Bamyan provinces.

Taliban sources also claimed the fall of Aibak, capital of Samangan province. However, a Hezb-i-Wahdat, Syed Mohammad Iqbal, had earlier claimed in a BBC interview that Aibak and Tashkurgan, another important town in Samangan, were still in opposition hands. He also announced the start of resistance against Taliban rule in areas recently captured by them in northern Afghanistan.

Independent confirmation of the latest Taliban victories on the battlefield couldn't be obtained, primarily due to the fact that there are presently almost no aid workers, journalists and diplomats in northern Afghanistan.

Quoting defence ministry sources in Kabul and Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghan vice-consul in Peshawar, Wali Naeemi, said Doshi fell Saturday afternoon without any resistance.

He said the town's elders and

commanders sent messages to the Taliban requesting them to take over its control. He said Khwajaghar, Khinjan, Dana-i-Ghauri, Charma, Dashtak, Larkhab and Charai Bamyan districts in various northern Afghanistan provinces had also fallen to the Taliban almost without fighting. He informed that fighting was continuing for the control of Darra-i-Rawan and Chopan districts. He added that a pro-Taliban commander, Baz Mohammad Khan, had trapped opposition forces between Doshi and Tala-i-Barfaq and was paving the way for Taliban to advance deeper into the area leading to Salang and Bamyan.

Naeemi also claimed local people had staged an uprising in support of the Taliban in six districts of Badakhshan, home province of ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani. Both Rabbani and former

prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar took refuge in Badakhshan's capital, Faizabad, after the fall of Takhar's provincial headquarters, Taloqan. He also claimed that 300 armed men surrendered to the Taliban Saturday in Taloqan.

It may be added that former defence minister Ahmad Shah Massood's men had reportedly blown up the Pankhar gorge that provided access to Badakhshan from Takhar. The same tactics was applied by Massood last year when his men blew up the road that opened into his native Panjsher valley.

According to Naeemi, a convoy of 300 tanks, military trucks and jeeps left Mazar-i-Sharif Saturday for Salang via Pule Khumri and Doshi. He said this expedition force would try to reach the northern side of the Salang Tunnel and secure the highway. He was unaware of any Taliban plans to push north of

Kabul and reach the southern opening of the Salang Tunnel after overcoming resistance from troops loyal to Massood.

APP quoting the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) said, Aibak fell after severe resistance by the forces of ethnic Uzbek warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam and Jamiat-i-Islami of former president Burhanuddin Rabbani. However, there was no immediate independent confirmation of the report which came after a series of military setbacks suffered by anti-Taliban forces in northern regions this month.

Reports said both Rabbani, who was ousted from Kabul by the Taliban militia two years ago, and his former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar were still in Badakhshan province.

AIP said a major offensive by the opposition forces against the uprising could not be ruled out.—AFP

Taliban accused of committing atrocities in northern areas

From AMANULLAH

QUETTA - Hazara Students Federation (HSF) and Tanzim Nasai Nau Hazara Mughal (TNNHM) have condemned Taliban's atrocities against different communities in Afghanistan.

Addressing a press conference here Monday Hasan Dakan of HSF and Latif Hazara of TNNHM have blamed Pakistan for backing Taliban despite the fact that aggressors were involved in assaults on women in northern areas.

They alleged that Taliban militia massacred three hundred innocent persons after capture of Mazar-i-Sharif and added that hundreds of women were raped during the search of houses in the areas under control of Taliban militia.

Leaders of HSF and TNNHM regretted that Pakistan's newspapers and government functionaries were supporting the atrocities of Taliban against Hazaras, Uzbeks, Pakhtuns, Tajiks and other communities.

They stated that there was similarity in atrocities of Indian Forces against innocent Kashmiris in held valley and Talibans in Northern areas, however, they demanded of Pakistan and Iran to play conciliatory role to pave the way for broadbased government in Kabul to take Afghanistan out of bloodshed.

Leaders of HSF and TNNHM regretted that nationalist and democratic parties in the country were silent on the criminal acts of Taliban against the different communities in Afghanistan.

Taliban block refugee entry into Pakistan

News 980817

KABUL: Hundreds of minority Afghans fleeing the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif that came under Taliban's control in recent weeks are being detained by the Taliban authorities on way to neighboring Pakistan, witnesses and aid workers said Sunday.

Taliban officials were not immediately available for comment. Mohammad Ali, a bus driver who shuttles between Kabul and the Pakistani border, said that since last Tuesday, Taliban authorities have stopped buses near Jalalabad, 100 kilometres east of Kabul and 50 kilometres west of the border.

"Passengers are questioned and if they are found to be Hazara Shiites or Uzbeks they are off loaded from the bus and not allowed to continue to Pakistan," Ali said. Ali and other drivers said those being detained were from Mazar-i-Sharif, the biggest city in northern Afghanistan, which fell to the Taliban fighters August 8. The loss of the city about 300 kilometres north of Kabul, was a major blow to the northern-based opposition alliance, and one of several recent victories for the Taliban.

The Taliban could soon control all of Afghanistan. They have held the capital since 1996.

Aid workers who insisted on anonymity said hundreds of people from the Hazara and Uzbek ethnic groups, who had fled Mazar-i-Sharif were being housed in schools near Jalalabad and transformed into camps. The workers had few details, saying they had not been asked to help care for the displaced people.

Hundreds of people including women and children have also been stopped from crossing the border at the historic Torkham Pass, people from the eastern Nangarhar province said. "The Taliban guards have been checking vehicles" at Samarkhel checkpoint outside Jalalabad for people coming from the north, a coach driver said.

Independent sources said at least 1,500 people, mostly ethnic Uzbeks and Hazaras, have been put in a school compound. The refugees who fled northern Afghanistan before and after the Taliban advance in the opposition-held region last week were however free to move in Nangarhar or travel to Kabul, the sources said.

But they cannot go back to their home provinces because the main highway leading to the north has been closed by the religious militia at Tagab valley, 70 kilometres northeast of Kabul, they said.

In a statement on Taliban Radio Saturday night, Taliban spokesman Abdul Manan Niyazi said that if Hazaras "did not repeat their previous deeds, they can continue their ordinary lives in Afghanistan."

A day earlier, Taliban's supreme leader Mullah Omar said in a radio address that minorities would be treated equally under the Islamic law.

Iranian radio reported that Afghans also fled north from Mazar-i-Sharif, toward Tajikistan. The former Soviet Republic had closed its border shortly before Mazar-i-Sharif fell. Iranian radio said some 10,000 refugees were at the border, in need of food and medical aid.

Taliban soldiers have also blocked the entry of refugees into Pakistan from northern Afghanistan, independent sources and travellers coming from the bordering areas said Sunday.—AP/AFP

FP 980818

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Taliban detain 1,000 minority members in camp

News 980820

JALALABAD: The Taliban militia has detained up to 1,000 members of minority groups at a desert camp near the Pakistani border, a camp guard said.

The detentions seemed aimed at rooting out all remaining opposition to the Taliban's rule.

A reporter and photographer from the Associated Press who arrived at the camp, 15 kilometers outside the eastern city of Jalalabad, were barred by the guard from entering or taking pictures. But aid groups also confirmed that refugees were being held there.

Taliban authorities gave conflicting and guarded explanations Tuesday for the detentions of fleeing Afghans, which began last week after the Taliban captured a key northern opposition stronghold, Mazar-e-Sharif.

At a checkpoint along the main highway to Pakistan, the Taliban guard, Hazrat Walli, scrutinized identification cards Tuesday. He said he was on the lookout for names and addresses indicating the bearers were ethnic Hazaras, Tajiks and Uzbeks fleeing from in a southeast arc toward

Pakistan.

The Taliban, like most Afghans, are ethnic Pashtuns. They have been accused of harassing and killing minorities in a sweep across Afghanistan that began in 1994.

Human rights groups are concerned about the latest detentions.

Amnesty International said it had heard reports that the Taliban had detained thousands of minorities and sent them to Kandahar, a Taliban stronghold 450 kilometers (280 miles) south of Kabul.

"Any detainee who has not been actively involved in combat should be released immediately," the London-based human rights group said.

The Taliban control most of the country, including the capital of Kabul. Recent victories against the northern-based opposition alliance, consisting mostly of minority ethnic and religious groups, have put them within reach of uniting all of Afghanistan under their strict form of Islamic law.

Walli, the guard, said about 80 men had been sent to a jail in nearby Jalalabad as authorities investigated

whether they were opposition fighters.

"We sent about 1,000 others, including women and children, to this camp," he said, gesturing to 100 or so mud huts on a stretch of treeless desert 100 meters away. He would not let an AP photographer take any pictures at the camp.

"We provide them bread and rice every day," Walli said, who like other guards was armed with a Kalashnikov rifle. He said the detainees could not go on to Pakistan because "they have no money." It was not clear if they would be allowed to leave the camp if they headed back into Afghanistan.

Justin Cockerell, head of the International Red Cross delegation in Jalalabad, said his staff had been able to visit the camp and found its inmates in good health. He said the UN World Food Program and others were providing food and medicine to those in the camp.

Jalalabad, 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of Pakistan, is the largest town on the busy highway linking Kabul with Pakistan, which for decades has been a haven for Afghans fleeing civil war.—AP

Tuesday, August 18, 1998

Shia groups unite against Taliban

By AIMAL KHAN

PESHAWAR - In a bid to halt the Taliban militia's march on Bamyan, a key opposition city in central Afghanistan, the pro-Iran Shiite groups have devised a joint strategy after two days of intensive deliberations.

Bamyan, a stronghold of Shiite factions, is currently under complete siege of Taliban forces.

The three main Shia groups, Hizb-i-Wahdat (Karim Khalili), Hizb-i-Wahdat (Akbari) and Harkat-i-Islami (Mohsini), have formed an alliance to jointly defend the Bamyan.

The Shiite leaders agreed to form a six-member high-level supervisory council, empowered to take decisions on all military and political matters, reported Peshawar-based Sahaar news agency. The council's headquarter will be in Bamyan and will comprise Karim Khalili and Ustad Muhaqiq (Khalili group), Ustad Akbari and Mustafa Kazmi (Akbari group) and Sved Ali Javed and Gen. Anwari (Mohsini group).

A seven-point charter of the proposed council pledges to jointly defend Bamyan and strive to maintain law and order situation in the area. It also resolved that collective measures would be taken to transform the newly-formed alliance into a party, comprising all members of the council.

In an interview with the Sahaar news agency, a spokesman of the council, Ali Moradi, said the formation of supervisory council would prove to be a good omen for the Shia community of Afghanistan. "The formation of the Council is not against the already existing opposition alliance. Rather it will work in collaboration with the Northern Alliance to resist the Islamic Militia's advances," said Moradi.

He claimed that Taliban had arrested about 2500 "innocent" people during the last week and taken them away to undisclosed location.

Although his claim was not confirmed by any other source, but reports coming from across the border suggested that as a precautionary measure, Taliban authorities had taken into custody some people.

980818

Taliban seek proof of Osama's involvement

News 980818

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: Reiterating that Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden was not behind the recent bomb explosions at the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the Taliban Islamic movement Sunday demanded proof of his involvement.

Mulla Wakil Ahmad, a senior Taliban leader, told The News from the movement's headquarters in Kandahar, that Bin Laden was suspected of involvement in acts of terrorism in the past also but no evidence was produced in support of all such allegations.

When told that US officials had information tentatively linking the Saudi billionaire to the bombings of the American embassies in East Africa, the Taliban leader demanded to know details of the "information" that made Bin Laden a top suspect.

The fact that an Arab national suspected of his involvement in the bomb blasts had been arrested is no conclusive proof that Osama bin

Laden sponsored the bombings. There are probably 22 Arab countries and there could be any number of motives for exploding the bombs in Kenya and Tanzania," he argued.

Mulla Wakil Ahmad, who is member of the powerful Taliban central Shura (council) and secretary to the movement's founder Mulla Mohammad Omar, said they would take a final decision about Bin Laden once they were provided evidence that he was behind the bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. He also denied reports that Bin Laden recently travelled to Kandahar for a meeting with Mulla Omar.

A few days ago, Mulla Omar himself had defended Bin Laden and ruled out his involvement in the bombing of the US embassies. In an interview with The News, he had asked as to how it was possible for a man who had taken refuge in Afghanistan to sponsor bomb explosions in distant Africa. He maintained

that Bin Laden didn't have the means and the power to do such a thing. "Our opponents are waiting for an excuse to blame the Taliban and Bin Laden," he complained.

Moreover, a Taliban spokesman, Mulla Abdul Hye Mutmain, on at least two occasions made it clear that they didn't suspect Bin Laden of involvement in the bombings.

From the Taliban pronouncements, it seems they are in no mood to expel Bin Laden from Afghanistan or hand him over to the Americans or the Saudis. As some of their leaders privately pointed out, they shouldn't be expected to surrender a mujahid and a friend of the Afghan people like Bin Laden to his enemies.

Taliban chop off hands, feet of three robbers

980818

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban rulers amputated one hand and one foot from each of three men convicted of robbery as thousands of spectators looked on in a sports stadium in the southern city of Kandahar, according to a radio report Thursday.

A medical team performed the punishment Wednesday under the Taliban's extreme version of Islamic law. Kandahar, about 450 kilometers south of the capital, is the main Taliban stronghold. Public dismemberment and executions have become common in Afghanistan under the Taliban.—AP

Kabul firm on shielding Osama

"discipline with clear instructions not to engage in any objectionable activity."

Shielding Osama

KABUL (AFP) - Taliban leaders Wednesday warned the United States not to enter Afghanistan to seize alleged Saudi terrorist Osama bin Laden, the top suspect in the US embassy bombings in Africa.

Mullah Hassan Akhund, the hardline militia's foreign minister, vowed that bin Laden would never be handed over to US authorities, even if hard evidence was produced to link him to the attacks.

"If the Americans have a plan to kidnap somebody from Afghanistan I find this funny," he said. "I do not think they will try to take United Nations officials here, part in interfering in Afghanistan."

"Let us see how they will carry it out: if they do they will contradict international principles and I do not think they will try to take part in interfering in Afghanistan."

"If they want, let them come," he said, pointing out that a succession of foreign invaders had been defeated in Afghanistan.

The minister's warning followed reports in some Gulf news-

seize bin Laden as part of the investigation into the August 7 bombings in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam which killed 257 people including 12 Americans.

Reclusive Taliban leader Mulla Mohammad Omar earlier vowed to allow bin Laden's arrest.

Osama bin Laden, the top suspect in the US embassy bombings in Africa, is the Islamic militia would never allow bin Laden's arrest.

"We will never hand over to anyone and protect him with our blood at all cost," the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted him as saying.

Pakistani intelligence sources have said the suspect, Mohammed Sadiq Oodch, confessed in Karachi that he was involved in the bombings and said bin Laden sponsored and financed the operation.

The Washington Post on Wednesday reported he told Pakistani intelligence that bin Laden controlled 4,000 to 5,000 heavily armed terrorists targeting US interests abroad. The suspect said that his Muslim extremist chief had a large arsenal of surface-to-air missiles, mortars, rockets and tanks, the paper said.

"We are a hundred percent ready to satisfy all that Osama has not and will never engage in any terrorist activity from Afghan soil," the reclusive Taliban leader said.

Abright said bin Laden's activities "are inimical to those of civilized people in the world and the United States." If the Taliban wished to be recognized they should not in a position of harboring any of those who are considered terrorists," she said.

The US Secretary of State briefly visited the Nairobi and Dar es Salaam bomb sites and talked with investigators following the deportation to Kenya of a suspect arrested in Pakistan on August 7.

Over to our blood at all cost," the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted him as saying.

"The US intelligence and investigation agencies find it convenient to blame Osama to cover up their own failures," he told the private Pakistan-based agency.

"The Washington Post on Wednesday reported he told Pakistani intelligence that bin Laden controlled 4,000 to 5,000 heavily armed terrorists targeting US interests abroad. The suspect said that his Muslim extremist chief had a large arsenal of surface-to-air missiles, mortars, rockets and tanks, the paper said.

Chechnya offers to establish ties with Taliban

News 980820

of rival armed factions traded allegations against each other.

There were also reports that ousted Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani had reached Mashhad in Iran after fleeing from Faizabad, capital of his native Badakhshan. Earlier, it was reported that Rabbani had taken refuge in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan.

The Peshawar-based Sahar News Agency reported Wednesday that former prime minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar also fled Faizabad along with Rabbani flew to Kulyab in neighbouring Tajikistan. Later, both reached Dushanbe. It also quoted Hezb-i-L

lami sources in Peshawar, denying newspaper reports that Hekmatyar was planning to seek refuge in Sudan.

The decision by Rabbani and Hekmatyar to abandon Faizabad gave credence to reports that the Taliban, with assistance from local religious elements, were now closing in on the Badakhshan capital. A bridge on the Kokcha river on the road between Shahr-i-Buzurg and Faizabad has been blown up by forces loyal to Ahmad Shah Masood.

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: Chechnya has offered to establish diplomatic relations with the Taliban-ruled Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

Taliban sources told "The News" that a letter by the Chechen foreign minister has been received by the Afghan foreign ministry, seeking political ties and diplomatic relations with Afghanistan.

"The letter said Chechnya would like to open its embassy in Kabul and expressed its willingness to allow opening of Afghanistan's mission in the Chechen capital of Grozny," the sources said.

By recognising the Taliban-led Afghan government, Chechnya would become the fourth country after Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates to do so. However, Chechnya itself hasn't yet been recognised as a country independent of Russia.

In the meanwhile, fighting report-

edly raged in Badakhshan provin-

ce on the 7th

independence day of

Afghanistan Wednesday and leaders

Documents reveal Indian, Iranian links with Dostam

Ap 980820

By AIMAL KHAN

PESHAWAR - Indian government's links with anti-Taliban Northern Alliance have been discovered following the seizure of certain top secret documents by the student militia, during search of the offices of Uzbek warlord Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum in northern Afghanistan.

Taliban have also seized a document wherein, Dostum has made an urgent appeal to Uzbek President Islam Karimov to immediately send him 1.2 million US dollars.

Taliban sources, who are in possession of photocopies of some of the seized documents, revealed that these were found in the offices of key opposition leaders, during the militia's march on Mazar-i-Sharif, Shaberghan and Maimana airport in Faryab province.

"Probably the rapid fall of key opposition strongholds to the militia in northern Afghanistan did not give them enough time to destroy these highly confidential documents," a source informed this scribe.

These documents, which immediately after seizure were sent to Taliban's headquarters in Kandahar for further scrutiny and analysis, reveal active involvement of India, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Iran and Russian Federation in Afghanistan.

These documents also includes a letter the Indian ambassador to Turkmenistan wrote to Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum, informing him that his government has already sent "material support" to him.

Another 100-page document, recovered from Maimana airbase in Faryab province, contains detailed information about the nature of cargo, destination and flights schedule of Iranian cargo plane from Mashhad to Maimana, Sheberghan, Faryab, Takhar, Bamyan and Mazar-i-Sharif, largely carrying military hardware from Iran to the opposition forces in northern Afghanistan.

Iranian AH-32 type transport plane, during the last 14 months, made 788 flights, 318 to Maimana and 470 to the rest of key cities in northern Afghanistan.

In 19 days, 5000 crates full of military logistics were transported to Maimana only from the Iranian city Mashad.

Confusion about attack in Afghanistan

News 980821

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: As expected, the US struck in Afghanistan Thursday night with at least five missile attacks in Khost and Jalalabad to destroy Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden's bases. However, Taliban spokesmen claimed Bin Laden had survived the attack.

The attack was launched between 9.20 and 9.45 pm, barely half an hour after a Bin Laden confidant, Dr Ayman Al-Zawahiri, spoke on satellite phone with this correspondent "from somewhere in Afghanistan." At that time, Dr Al-Zawahiri said Bin Laden was safe and sound.

There was great confusion earlier whether it was an air raid by American jet-fighters or a missile attack. Taliban officials were unaware if it was a missile or air attack. However, it was later confirmed that Tomahawk Cruise missile were fired from American ships in the Arabian Sea. These missiles are known for their accuracy and long range, up to 2000 Kilometres.

Mulla Abdul Hye Mutmain, a Taliban spokesman in Kandahar in southwestern Afghanistan, also thought it was an attack by US jet-fighters. He informed that the planes attacked two or three places in Khost and also Jalalabad. "The Americans failed to hit their targets. Osama Bin Laden is safe and the casualties are

not as high as we expected in such attacks. We are still waiting for details about the number of people killed and injured," he said.

Mutmain, who is head of the information department in Kandahar which serves as headquarters of the Taliban Islamic Movement, said their jet-fighters would have tried to tackle the intruding American planes had the military airbases at Khost and Jalalabad been operational. "We cannot be overawed by such attacks. We know how to defend our country," he stressed.

Information was hard to get as Taliban leaders were not traceable, and those who were accessible and awake at that time in the night said they themselves were waiting for details of the air strikes and damage caused in Khost and Jalalabad. The

news was first broken by the CNN and, thereafter, began a scramble for bits and pieces of information from a war-ravaged country like Afghanistan where the communication system is almost non-existent.

News 980819

Taliban accused of 'ethnic massacre'

MOSCOW: Russia on Thursday accused Afghanistan's Taliban militia of committing an "ethnic massacre" in capturing an opposition stronghold and called on the international community to intervene in the conflict.

First Deputy Foreign Minister

Boris Pastukhov told the ITAR-TASS news agency that Russia had asked

Prior to confirmation of reports that it was a Cruise missile attack, there was speculation as to how the US jet-fighters made their way to Khost, which is in southern Afghanistan on the border with Pakistan's North Waziristan agency, and Jalalabad, capital of Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan bordering Khyber and Kurram agencies in Paktia. Some reports at that time said the planes flew from US ships and took the Gwadar route to enter southern Afghanistan and bomb targets in Khost and Jalalabad. There were also speculation whether the Americans used bases in the region, ranging from those in the Gulf to

Central Asia, to reach Afghanistan. It was also pointed out that the advanced US jet-fighters can refuel in the air and, thus, flying from a distant place wasn't an insurmountable problem.

It was also pointed out that sending jet-fighters to Afghanistan overflying Pakistan in a politically volatile area was fraught with risks.

Taliban and Pakistani sources said the Khost airfield and some of its surrounding area was destroyed by the missile attack. The Al-Badr camp near the Pakistan border in Khost where Bin Laden held his news conference in May and where he reportedly spent lot of time, was also said to have been attacked. So were the Zhawar camp belonging to former mujahideen commander Mulla Jalaluddin Haqqani, all in Khost. All these bases were built during the "Jehad" against the Soviet occupation

in Afghanistan and were used for keeping troops, maintaining stockpiles of arms, and training fighters.

However, Khost governor Mulla Abdullah said Khost airport wasn't attacked and the Zhawar and other bases which were targeted escaped damage.

In Nangarhar, the target was said to be the Hadda farm near Jalalabad where Bin Laden lived in a newly-built house in a colony which also housed Hezb-i-Islami chief Mulla Yunis Khalis and other mujahideen leaders. Bin Laden took refuge in Jalalabad when he came to Afghanistan in May 1996 from Sudan. It was reported that a house belonging to late mujahideen commander Engineer Mahmood was the target of the missile attack. It apparently wasn't hit. Some casualties reportedly occurred in the missile attack on Jalalabad.

The international community to do everything it could to stop the "ethnic massacre" organised by the radical Islamic militia when it overran the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif Saturday.

"We have reliable information and refugee testimony on what went on in the city and details from refugees," Pastukhov said.—AFP

More aid workers leave Afghanistan

News 980824

ISLAMABAD: More aid workers left Afghanistan Sunday in the wake of the US attack.

Red Cross workers arriving in Pakistan from the southern Afghan city of Kandahar refused to speak to newsmen as they bundled enough luggage for a long stay into trucks.

Oliver Durr, Head of the International Red Cross delegation, said the reduction of his staff in Kandahar and the Afghan capital of Kabul was temporary "pending a change in the situation". Durr said 18 workers were evacuated Sunday, nine each from Kandahar and Kabul. It was not immediately clear how many stayed behind to run Red Cross hospitals there.

Kabul was reported quiet Sunday after anti-Western demonstrations Saturday. Also Saturday, demonstrators shouting anti-foreigner slogans destroyed the offices of a Medical aid group in the far western city of Herat. No injuries were reported.

A march Friday in Jalalabad,

about 80 miles east of Kabul, also turned violent, with protesters throwing bricks at UN offices. UN officials said a fire set in the melee heavily damaged the building. No one was injured because the offices were closed at the time.

The United Nations pulled non-Afghan staff out of Jalalabad, Kabul and Herat. UN workers also retreated to the Pakistani capital of Islamabad from Peshawar.

The exodus of foreign aid workers from various agencies comes from a country reduced by years of civil war to one of the poorest and most heavily mined in the world.

UN spokeswoman Sarah Russell said her organizations food, medical and de-mining programs were continuing under Afghan staff.

But she acknowledged problems could arise as food and medicine ran out. "At the moment, people have got enough supplies to keep going. It's so unpredictable. It's extremely hard to plan," Russell said.—AP

Accord signed with Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (NNI)

Pakistan and Afghanistan on Thursday signed a services agreement under which Pakistan will provide necessary assistance in extension of telecom services to Afghanistan through a newly-established 120 channels digital radio link between Peshawar and Kabul. The agreement was inked by the Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited and PT&T of Afghanistan. The digital radio link was installed by PTCL for providing telecommunication facilities to Afghanistan. FP 9 80828

Relief agencies withdraw staff from Afghanistan

News 980821

Islamabad from Jalalabad, one of four Afghan cities where the UNHCR has a total of around 12 expatriate staff. The other cities are Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. Jalalabad is considered the riskiest place, Shunohara said.

Two UNHCR expatriates remain in Jalalabad, which is controlled by the Taliban militia. The ICRC has asked around ten non-essential staff out of some 90 expatriates to leave the country for several days.

"We took some preventive measures due to the climate of insecurity in Afghanistan and the tensions with neighbouring countries," said spokeswoman Corinne Adam.—AFP

GENEVA: The UN refugee agency and the International Committee of the Red Cross have withdrawn some staff from Afghanistan for security reasons, officials said Thursday.

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) evacuated a US delegate after the United States warned humanitarian organizations Tuesday that non-Muslim organizations and non-Muslim humanitarian staff faced serious threats, spokeswoman Maki Shunohara said.

"We do take (the threats) seriously because usually they have very good information," she said. The US delegate was evacuated to

Afghans unitedly condemn aggression

By AIMAL KHAN

PESHAWAR - Condemning the US missiles attacks on their country, the Afghan leaders from both sides of the political divide Friday were unanimous in their opinion that the US strikes were a naked violation of international law and tantamount to breach of the sovereignty of an independent state.

The Taliban spokesman in Kandahar, Mollah Abdul Wakil Mutawakkil told Radio Tehran on Friday that the American cowardly attack against the integrity and unity of Afghanistan was a brazen violation of international law. "The US administration neither contacted us nor provided any proof of Osama Bin Laden's involvement in the terrorist activities", he said adding that instead the Americans chose to rain Afghanistan territory with cruise missiles.

Condemning the dual standards of the US concerning terrorism, he said the Americans on one hand trumpeted anti-terrorist actions while on the other they themselves committed a blunt terrorist act on Afghanistan's soil.

Mutawakkil said "by such actions the American government is jeopardising the international efforts for peace and order in the world".

In response to a question about the expected missiles or airstrikes in future, he said "we will take all possible steps to protect our national sovereignty and safety of Osama Bin Laden".

A representative of ousted Afghan president, Burhanuddin

Rabbani, Maulvi Abdul Qudoos called the missile strikes as a criminal act on the part of United States and opined that after this move, a great anguish and unrest had been caused among the Afghans against the US.

No Afghan could dissociate himself from this situation, he said adding that if the situation went as it is, then the sense of national unity among the Afghans would re-emerge and Taliban and other mujahideen groups would be compelled to forge unity against the foreign invaders.

He reminded the Americans that it had been the habit and tradition of Afghans that they had always unitedly frustrated the foreign aggression irrespective of their differences.

The Peshawar-based Sahar News Agency also released the statements of condemnation of certain Afghan figures in Peshawar. They included the former political advisor of Gulbadeen Hekmatyar, Mohammad Zamann Muzammil, intellectual and literary figure of Afghanistan Zalmay Ewadhai, former Afghan General Abdus Samad Momand and Acting Director of Afghan Information Centre in Peshawar, Zarghoon Shah Shinvari. They all condemned the US strikes and declared it a dastardly way of bringing weaker nations to its submission.

Talking to *The Frontier Post*,

an eminent Afghan leader, Qazi Amin Waqad said: "the US airstrikes

were not merely an attack on

Afghanistan rather it was an open aggression against the Muslims of entire region".

UN to pull out staff from Afghanistan

FP 22/08/22

— Official injured in Kabul attack expires

By AIMAL KHAN

PESHAWAR - The United Nations Saturday decided to withdraw all its staff from Afghanistan following the killing of its military adviser in an attack by unidentified gunmen in Kabul a day earlier.

Authentic sources told *The Frontier Post* that the UN had also informed Taliban authorities in Kabul and Islamabad of its decision to pull out all its personnel from the war-torn country.

"The decision is apparently driven by the deteriorating security environment in Afghanistan, which is manifested in the killing of UN military advisor Lt-Col. Carmine Calo," the sources pointed out.

Also on Saturday, ACBAR, a joint body of about 674 registered non-government organisations (NGOs) working in Afghanistan, was reported to have called back its volunteers and officials from the war-battered country.

Most Americans and other foreigners working for the ACBAR had already left Peshawar for Islamabad on Friday while the remaining few departed on Saturday. Earlier, the Sahaar News Agency here reported that the Islamabad-based UN representative for Afghanistan, James Cobby, Saturday handed a strongly worded communiqué to the Afghan Foreign Ministry officials, protesting the attacks on UN offices in Afghanistan.

The UN representative warned the Taliban administration in

Kabul that if it failed to protect the world body's personnel and property in Afghanistan, it would be compelled to withdraw its staff from Afghanistan.

He also demanded stringent action against the culprits responsible for attacking the UN staffers in Kabul.

In a related development, the United Nations has given its personnel in Kabul the option to leave the shambolic Afghan capital city if they wanted to do so.

Earlier in the day, the military adviser of the United Nations Mission in Kabul, who along with another world body official had received grievous injuries in a shooting attack in Kabul last Friday, succumbed to injuries Saturday.

The dead body of Lt. Col. Carmine Calo, 42, an Italian national, was airlifted from Kabul to Islamabad Saturday afternoon in a UN chartered plane.

The deceased UN military adviser had received severe bullet wounds. Another UN official, a Political Affairs Officer at the Mission, Eric Lavertu, who is from France, was also injured in the attack. Eric Lavertu was also evacuated from Kabul and is under treatment in Islamabad. The UN sources said the French national was in stable condition.

The two officials were injured when unidentified gunmen shot at a small group of UN officials in a mini-bus outside the UN Mission building in Kabul on last Friday where a large crowd of Afghans

was protesting against the US cruise missiles strikes on Afghanistan.

US says it urged
Taliban to control,

not expel Osama

WASHINGTON: The United States has urged the Taliban militia in Afghanistan to control Saudi millionaire Osama bin Laden, but has not asked for his expulsion, a State Department official said Wednesday.

After viewing the bombed US embassy in Nairobi Tuesday, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called on Taliban to "stop harbouring any of those considered terrorists" if they wished to gain international recognition.

Albright's comments were read as an appeal to the Islamic militia now in control of most of Afghanistan to expel Osama bin Laden.

"Terrorism is something on our agenda with Taliban," the State Department official said. "On the particular issue of Osama bin Laden, we have told them he should not be allowed to engage in international activities," he said.—AFP

Swoop on illegal immigrants shortly

News 980824

Diplomats warned against visiting NWFP.

IMTIAZ HUSSAIN in
Peshawar and SHAUKAT

PIRACHA in Islamabad

The backlash to US missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan has prompted the federal government to launch an operation against illegal immigrants.

Competent sources told *The Frontier Post* Sunday that in addition to a swoop on the illegal immigrants, the movement of Afghan refugees across the country would be restricted to their respective camps.

A decision to the effect was taken Saturday at a meeting chaired by Interior Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain in Islamabad.

The meeting discussed a host of measures for reinforcing security and effectively warding off the grave threat to diplomats, their families, foreign businesses and American interests in particular.

Intelligence officials revealed that high-ups of security agencies were directed to launch a crack-

down on the illegal immigrants immediately, and focus the swoop on Arab nationals, "most of whom have taken refuge in tribal areas."

It is learnt that the assistance of field officers working for different law-enforcing agencies, who are familiar with the lingering issue of illegal immigrants and remained involved in action against them, has also been sought.

According to informed sources, the operation aimed at confining the movement of Afghan refugees to their camps would be launched within a week after the requisite home-work is completed.

The Afghan Commissionate has been asked to mount a stake-out for monitoring the suspects, who might stir trouble. A conservative estimate puts at more than 1.2 million the number of Afghan refugees living in the NWFP.

It merits a mention that soon after the US missiles attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan, almost all foreign nationals have already left the NWFP for Islamabad.

ISLAMABAD: An Italian military officer, who was wounded by unidentified gunmen in the Afghan capital of Kabul, died Saturday, a UN spokeswoman said.

Lt Col Carmine Calo, part of the UN Observer Force, along with a Frenchman who worked for the United Nations in Kabul, were shot on Friday as they drove through the city.

The Taliban deputy foreign minister expressed deep "regret" over his death while the Italian foreign ministry expressed the hope that "those responsible for the odious crime" would be punished.

The shooting occurred a day after a US cruise missile attack on a suspected terrorist base in Afghanistan.

It was not clear if the attack was related to Thursday's US missile strikes.

After news of Calo's death, the Italian Foreign Ministry expressed hope that "those responsible for the odious crime, which struck down a worker for peace, are identified and brought to justice" and called on the Taliban which rule Afghanistan to investigate.

The UN spokeswoman, Sarah Russell, said Lieutenant Colonel Calo died of his injuries in a Kabul hospital early Saturday. She said, "we regret to inform that Lt Col Calo from the United Nations Special Mission for Afghanistan died of his injuries in Kabul this morning."

Russell said Carmine's wife, in Italy, had been informed, and that his body would be flown out later Saturday. Calo, who was in his late 40s,

Italian UN worker shot in Kabul dies

News 980823

had arrived Afghanistan only three weeks ago.

A second UN official, French national Eric Lavertu, also from UNSMA, suffered relatively light injuries in the attack and was flown out of Kabul to Pakistan on Friday.

An official of the UN Special Mission for Afghanistan confirmed that the French national is in stable condition.

In Kabul, Taliban Deputy Foreign Minister Mawhi Abdul Rahman Zahed expressed deep "regret" over the death of Carmine Calo.

"We are deeply sorry and regret the tragedy. Hopefully this will not affect the relations between UN and Taliban government in Kabul," Zahed said.

He said 13 suspects had been arrested and an investigation had been ordered to find those involved in the shooting.

Describing it as an "isolated" incident, Zahed assured the security of foreigners and their offices in Kabul. "UN and other people left behind can live without any concern," he said.

About 25 foreign nationals remain in Kabul, mainly Red Cross staff and several UN workers.

Meanwhile, some 200 youths staged another demonstration Saturday in Kabul to protest the US missile strikes on suspected terrorist bases in the eastern Afghan city of Khost.

The anti-US rally was organised by Kabul University students against Thursday's missile raids.

No incident was been reported.—

AP/AF/APP

Taliban capture Luna missiles

News 980827

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Taliban are claiming to have laid their hands for the first time on Russian-made Luna missiles after having captured the Kyan valley in Baghlan province in northern Afghanistan.

Mulla Khairullah Khairkhwa, Afghanistan's interior minister and head of the Taliban political commission for northern Afghanistan, said the long-range Luna missiles were dumped in the valley held by the Ismaili militia head Syed Mansoor Naderi and his US-educated son, Syed Jaffar Naderi, who was also designated as governor of Baghlan province.

A Taliban spokesman in Kandahar, Mulla Abdul Hye Mutmain, said the Taliban captured a huge quantity of arms and ammunition and heavy weapons from the Kyan valley. He said the Taliban subsequently took control of a string of valleys near Kyan and Doshi, including Askar, Tarmash, Dahn-i-Ghauri, Kamporab, Dashtak, Zarghi, Qalanguzar and Wadu.

Taliban take over last Jumbush base

By AIMAL KHAN

PESHAWAR - The last territory under the influence of Jumbush-i-Milli Afghanistan in Baghlan province also fell to the Taliban fighters between the night of Sunday and Monday.

The students militia occupied the Kayan area of the province after facing a tough resistance on Sunday night, the Sahaar News Agency reported.

The Kayan militia led by General Masnoor Nadri could not face the Taliban onslaught and fled to Darra Sauf of Samangan province.

General Nadir had the support of some 30,000 Ismailis in the area and was enjoying the status of the religious head of the sect in Kayan. During the period of Dr. Naseeb in Afghanistan, the honorary rank of general was conferred on Mansoor Nadri and he remained the deputy of Jumbush-i-Milli chief General Rasheed Dostum for quite a long time.

On the other hand, Jafar Nadri, the son of General Mansoor Nadri had also taken refuge in Tajikistan a few days ago. He was the governor of Baghlan province during Rabbani's regime in Kabul.

With the fall of Kayan to Taliban, the last resort of Jumbush-i-Milli in Afghanistan has also gone into the hands of hardline

Islamic militia. According to latest report, the Taliban officials are in a meeting with the Hizb-e-Wahdat representatives on Monday night. They are reported to have demanded a safe entry to Bamyan.

NNI adds: Taliban on Monday overran a strategic pass north of Kabul and captured a cache of arms and ammunition, official Afghan news agency Bakhtar reports.

The Taliban troops launched offensive against Hizb-e-Wahdat forces early in the morning and captured "Qiyam Pass" 120 north of the capital, the news agency reported. The rival Hizb-e-Wahdat forces had to retreat from the pass, close to Bamyan province, controlled by Hizb-e-Wahdat. No independent confirmation was available of the Taliban claim.

News 980826

Afghan women allowed to work

ISLAMABAD: The Taliban authorities have permitted Afghan women to work in hospitals and schools in the country.

An Australian relief worker Robin Makarthy, who has been expelled from Kandahar, said the Taliban officials have softened their earlier strict policies, Voice of America reported.

He said girls schools have been opened in Kandahar and Afghan women have been allowed to work in hospitals.—APP

Osama alive, safe in Afghanistan

News 980824

ABU DHABI (AFP) - Saudi millionaire dissident Osama bin Laden is alive and 'secure' in Afghanistan, the Taliban militia's representative in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) told AFP on Sunday.

'Osama bin Laden is still in Afghanistan and he is secure,' the Taliban's charge d'affaires Jan Mohammad Madani in Abu Dhabi said.

'He is our guest and we will defend him,' he added.

Madani's comments came after US attacks on suspected terrorist sites in Afghanistan and Sudan on Thursday.

The United States said the sites were linked to bin Laden, who it also accused of being behind the recent bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that left more than 250 people dead and thousands injured.

It was initially unclear if bin Laden had survived Thursday's attacks. On Friday, the United States said they did not know his exact location.

The UAE, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are the only three countries to

have recognised the Taliban as Afghanistan's legitimate government. Madani said the Taliban now consider themselves to be 'at war with the United States' following the 'unjustifiable raids against our country.'

'Our relations with the United States were better before (the attacks) and we were expecting them to recognise the Taliban government,' he said.

The Taliban militia have repeatedly said they will not hand over bin Laden and have rejected US accusations that the millionaire was sponsoring terrorism. Chief of Tehrik Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan terming the American missile attack on Afghanistan and Sudan a terrorist act, said "these attacks have claimed lives of a number of innocent people in both the countries".

"Imposing self designed judgement without giving time to the other party to defend, is a kind of highhandedness", Imran told reporters at the local airport Sunday prior to leaving for Karachi.

Taliban ready to hold talks with US

News 980827

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Taliban Islamic Movement has said it was ready to hold talks with any country, including the US, on all issues.

Reacting to stories carried out by certain news agencies that the supreme Taliban leader Mulla Mohammad Omar had ruled out talks with the US after the August 20 air strike on Afghanistan, a senior Taliban leader Mulla Wakil Ahmadi told The News that their government believed in keeping the channels of communication open to resolve outstanding issues. "Reaching an agreement on issues, including the one concerning Osama bin Laden, is something different. But refusing talks is not part of our policy," he argued.

Mulla Omar had been quoted as saying in earlier reports that the US must regret the attack and pay compensation before talks could be held with it.

Mulla Wakil said the Taliban-led Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was still committed to allowing Osama bin Laden to stay in Afghanistan as a guest and there was no question of handing him over to the US. "How can we hand him over to the US when there is no evidence against his involvement in the bombings at the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania? Moreover, we don't have diplomatic ties with the US and Afghanistan doesn't have an extradition treaty with any country

of the world. If evidence was made available to us, we could consider trying Osama bin Laden in a court of law in Afghanistan," he explained.

Mulla Wakil argued that it was strange that the US launched an attack on Osama bin Laden before coming up with any evidence linking him to the Nairobi and Dar es Salam. It is just a cover-up of the failures of the American intelligence agencies and Osama is being made a scapegoat.

The Taliban leader said one major proof of the Afghan government's positive attitude towards neighbouring and other countries was the recent arrival of an Iranian diplomat in Kandahar to meet the 78 Iranians arrested in Afghanistan, including those caught recently after the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan. "A second Iranian delegation would be coming to Kandahar soon. We want to resolve our problems with Iran peacefully," he said. However, he termed it wrong that some Iranian prisoners would be freed by the Taliban as a gesture of goodwill when the Iranian delegation next comes to Kandahar.

Mulla Wakil informed that the US delegation in Islamabad had presented certain papers to Afghanistan's embassy Tuesday. He expressed his ignorance about the contents of the letter and said the foreign ministry would reply to the letter once it was discussed.

Osama vows not to strike US from Afghan soil

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Exiled Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden has promised not to threaten the United States or any other country while he is in Afghanistan, Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar was quoted Monday as saying.

The Afghan Islamic Press quoted Omar as saying bin Laden made the pledge after the Taliban chief voiced displeasure Sunday over reported threats against the US following its missile attacks in Afghanistan.

"We asked him to refrain from such activities and Osama bin Laden has accepted our advice and promised to abide by it," the Pakistan-based agency quoted Omar as saying.

Omar said in the past bin Laden had been clearly told not to engage in any political or military activities from Afghan soil.

His "threatening statements" following the US attack were a violation of that commitment, Omar said, speaking from the headquarters of the Islamic militia at

Kandahar in southern Afghanistan.

But Washington's UN ambassador cast doubt on the Taliban commitment.

"We're a little doubtful that's the case," Ambassador Bill Richardson told CNN.

"I went to Afghanistan to talk to the Taliban some months ago to try to get them to extradite bin Laden at the very least, and not let him engage in political or terrorist activities," Richardson said.

"Needless to say the Taliban didn't fulfill that commitment."

The US accuses the exiled Saudi millionaire of being behind the August 7 US embassy bomb blasts in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam that killed 257 people, including 12 Americans.

The United States launched cruise missile attacks Thursday on bases inside Afghanistan which it said were linked to bin Laden. Washington simultaneously bombed an alleged chemical-weapons factory in Sudan.

Taliban capture 800 Ismaili militiamen

F.P. Report 980826

PESHAWAR - Taliban Tuesday arrested 800 troops of General Mansoor Naderi, head of the Ismaili militia at Qian Darra in Baghlan province.

The strategic Darra (pass), which fell to the student militia on Monday, has opened for Taliban forces another important corridor to the Central Bamyan province, which now has come well within their striking distance.

The militia also captured a huge depot of sophisticated arms and ammunition, reported the Peshawar-based Sahar News Agency.

Relative calm was reported from the frontlines across the war-tattered country, the agency said, adding that Taliban were preparing for an offensive on Shi'ite Afghan heartland, the Bamyan province.

NGOs staff asked not to visit refugee camps

By Ismail Khan

PESHAWAR: In the backdrop of missile attack on Afghanistan and the resultant anger against the US and its Western allies, the Afghan Refugee Commissionate has asked expatriots associated with international relief agencies to avoid visiting the Afghan refugee camps and tribal areas.

"You are hereby informed once again in writing that the movements of foreign expatriot staff engaged with your respective NGOs may please be restricted to the offices only and avoid visits to Afghan refugee camps and tribal areas due to critical situation till further order," said a circular issued to all heads of the international relief agencies by the deputy commissioner, Afghan Refugee Commissionate.

"We don't want any harm come to the aid workers, when the tempers

are running so high," said a senior official of the refugee commissionate which monitors and oversees the refugee-related affairs in Pakistan including matters relating to the NGOs. "We don't want the repeat of attack on UN officials in Kabul," said the official who did not want to be named. The UN deputy military attaché, Lt Col Carmine Calo was killed and his French colleague wounded when shot at by unidentified gunmen in the Afghan capital. Taliban later claimed to have arrested the attackers who, they said, would be put on trial in the special military court.

There are a total of 82 foreign and Afghan NGOs including Western and Islamic relief organisations. Most of the expatriot staff associated with the agencies have already left Peshawar either for Islamabad or their respective countries after the August 20 missile attack on sus-

pected terrorist camps in Khost in southern Afghanistan.

Arabs associated with the 11 Islamic NGOs said the move was likely to affect their operations in refugee camps. "We don't know what is going to happen if the expatriates are stopped from visiting the camps," said an Arab aid worker. The commissionate official, however, said the orders were not applicable to the Islamic NGOs. "They have nothing to worry about," said the official.

The order has also sparked fears among the 106-member small Arab community in Peshawar of an impending crackdown. Officials both in the NWFP Home Department and Afghan Refugee Commissionate deny this was the case.

Pakistan is home to an estimated 1.5 million Afghan refugees, most of whom rely on assistance from the international aid agencies.

Dostam seeks Turkish support on Afghanistan

ANKARA (AFP) - General Abdul Rashid Dostam, leader of Afghanistan's Uzbek militia, was in Turkey Wednesday seeking Ankara's support in his struggle against the Islamic Taliban movement, Turkish officials said.

"General Dostam is in Ankara for certain contacts," foreign ministry spokesman Necati Utkan told reporters, declining to specify how and when he arrived.

But sources said he had probably arrived from Iran on Tuesday.

Dostam has already met some government officials and was due to hold talks with foreign ministry authorities later on Wednesday, Turkish sources said.

"He is seeking Turkey's backing," one source said, without elaborating.

It was not immediately clear if Dostam was seeking asylum in Turkey or would return to Afghanistan to pursue his fight against the Taliban.

Dostam briefly fled to Turkey last year when one of his aides, General Abdulmalik, toppled him as leader of the Afghan Uzbeks.

But he returned to his stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif in northern Afghanistan last September and returned power before being ousted by the Taliban in August.

An unconfirmed report by the Ankara news agency suggested Abdulmalik, who has recently returned from Dostam, was also in Ankara.

Dostam's faction is part of an opposition alliance which includes Afghan President Buihanuddin Rabbani, former defence minister Ahmed Shah Massoud and the Shi'ite Hezb-i-Wahdat faction.

Turkey last said Friday that the Taliban movement's military advance in Afghanistan should be stopped in a move reflecting Ankara's fears on rising Islamic fundamentalism and a rivalry with Asia's lucrative marketing central sources. Ankara 980827

From Eton to Akora

SADAQAT JAN portrays a sketch of Madrasa Haqqania, which is proud of producing almost all the Talibans, and discusses the role its students have played in the war against the now defunct Soviet Union as well as in Afghanistan

News 980831

Mulla Omar says Clinton should be stoned to death

ISLAMABAD: The leader of Afghanistan's Taliban army Mulla Mohammed Omar said US President Bill Clinton should be stoned to death for his indiscretions involving women other than his wife, according to a weekly newspaper published by the Islamic group, Harkatul Ansar.

The US administration last year declared this group a terrorist organisation.

The newspaper, quoting Omar, said "Clinton is a confessed sinner and a bad person."

"Ruling out the possibility of holding negotiations with Clinton, Omar was quoted as saying "it is absolutely not possible to negotiate with such a person and he should be removed (from power) and stoned to death. He is of bad character."

Referring to the August 20 missile attack on eastern Afghanistan by the United States, the newspaper quoted Omar as demanding an apology from the US administration. "America should apologise to the world of Islam and should remove its forces from Muslim countries," the newspaper quoted Omar as saying.—AP

The bustling town of Akora Khattak, about 130 kilometres from Islamabad on the historic road to Peshawar, is seldom out of mention. In folklore it is mentioned for the legendary Pashto poet Khushal Khan Khattak whose great grandfather lent his name to it. It is thought of as a stronghold of Pashto nationalists in discussions on Pakistani politics. And for students of Islamic theology Akora Khattak is known as Deoband Sahi or second Deoband — because of Darul-ul-Uloom Haqqania.

Haqqania is eponymous to a saintly man, late Maulana Abdul Haq who founded it in September 1947. It was in focus this past week as its students were gone on very unusual holidays: they were given a break from their strenuous studies to take part in Jihad.

Of its 2000 students or Taliban, about 60 percent are Afghans who went to their ravaged country to help their government establish its writ on the recently captured areas in the north.

Afghanistan's ruling Taliban militia made stunning gains early this month against its beleaguered opposition in the north, capturing its strongholds of Mazar-i-Sharif, Taloqan, Samangan and few districts in Badakhshan province, base of the ousted president Burhanuddin Rabbani.

In the backdrop of these wins Taliban needed additional men to consolidate their hold. A formal request was made to the management of Haqqania by none else than the Ameerul Momineen Mulla Mohammad Omar himself. The paramount leader requested the Afghan students of Haqqania to fortify the Taliban ranks.

In a letter to Maulana Anwarul Haq, Haqqania's administrator, he addressed the Afghan students: "as Taliban have captured Samangan they need religiously educated and good Muslim individuals to help them establish peace and run administrative affairs in the newly gained areas. Those willing should report to the Taliban headquarters in Kaadhar."

To accommodate the Taliban request, administrators of various madrasas in the NWFP held a meeting at Haqqania towards the end of July and decided to break off for discussions so as to allow their Afghan students to return to Afghanistan and strengthen the ranks of the Taliban militia who routed their opposition Northern Alliance and captured large swathes of territory.

Following the meeting, representatives of the Taliban government visited Haqqania and addressed Afghan students there, subsequently most of them volunteered to go back to their homeland to help their government in whatever capacity they could. Haqqania remained closed for over a week.

The otherwise modest madrasa campus is given prominence by a grand mosque, which on the rest of its three sides is surrounded by rows of rooms of various departments. Quietness now loomed over the campus. Class rooms, with mats and one or two, broken glass panes in doors and windows, were deserted.

Some activity was going on in Darul Ettemam or the administration office. There is no furniture in the room except for the two tables just high enough to enable the clerks to lean on while they squat cross-legged on the floor with rug spread over it. Pillows are lined up against walls of the room with no chairs. Clerks and visitors sit on the mat putting off their shoes at the door. The room presents a scene from any of the paintings on renowned scientists or scholars of the medieval Islamic era. The only modernity that has managed to creep in to the setting is a telephone.

Maulana Anwarul Haq, whose late father established the institution is Haqqania's real administrator while his older brother Maulana Samiul Haq, chief of his own faction of Jamiatul Ulema-e-Islami (JUI-S), maintains the figurative title of Haqqania's patron in chief.

Sitting in a corner of Darul Ettemam, Anwarul Haq takes pride in the large number of former Haqqanians who now are

among the top Taliban leadership, extending bit by bit their rule over Afghanistan. "He (Mullah Omar) remained here for some time, though he did not graduate," recalls Anwarul Haq. "He will return to complete his studies," an Afghan clerk sitting nearby chirped in.

Maulvi Saeed Rehman Haqqani, Taliban ambassador to Islamabad; Maulvi Kabir, vice president Taliban Shura (council) and governor of Jalalabad; Maulvi Mohammad Hasan Rehmani, governor Kandhar; Maulvi Abdul Manan Niazi, governor Mazar-i-Sharif and interior minister Khairullah Khairkhwa. Anwarul Haq lists as some of the very known Taliban who have graduated from the madrasa. "I do not exactly remember who was or was not our student but around 90 percent of the Taliban are former or present Haqqanians," he claims. Once graduated, former Haqqanians suffix Haqqani to their names, to keep and association with their alma mater.

Anwarul Haq rules out that Taliban popped up on the scene overnight. "All of them (Taliban) were engaged in jihad ever since Soviet troops set their feet on the Afghan soil but were then aligned with one of the other group fighting the invasion," Haq says. Mulla Rabbani and a renowned Taliban commander late Mulla Borjan were associated with Hizb-e-Islami (Younus Khalis faction) and Mulla Mohammad Omar was a partyman of the Harkat-e-Islami of Nabi Mohammad," says he.

"They regrouped themselves into the Taliban movement when they felt leadership of those parties was fighting for power alone," Anwarul Haq says. A group of rosy cheeked Taliban rustled into Anwarul Haq's office, all squatting along the walls. "They are from the Central Asian Republics (CARs)," Anwarul Haq says. The office clerks were making their count to pay them Rs 100 each, their modest monthly stipend.

The Amu Darya (Oxus river) forms the border between Afghanistan and the three Central Asian Republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. Many of the students even get drowned while crossing this river. Haqqania's management claims it has

students from all the CARs. "You see governments in these republics are still sticking to their defunct communist ideals. They will not allow Islam to spread," Haq says. "Students from these states sneak out of their countries cross the Oxus into Afghanistan and finally make it to religious schools across Pakistan."

The handful of Central Asian students in Haqqania, about 60 in all, have in fact reversed what history tells about the exotic region. For Muslims in the Indian sub-continent Bokhara, Samarkand and Tashkent had stood for great seats of learning in the medieval Islamic era, names which today arouse nostalgic feelings. For ages Muslims from the sub-continent had travelled to Central Asia for knowledge. Centuries later the tide is flowing the other way round.

"Since 1992, Taliban from the Central Asia are being enrolled in madrasas in Pakistan," says Maulana Wisal Khan, who supervises Darul ul Uloom Haqqania's academic affairs.

And while in Pakistan they face all odds — new language, different eating habits and learning of a religion they do not know much of. But pushed by zeal they are undeterred.

Pursuit of religious knowledge by the Central Asian students and Taliban's strong connections with Haqqania have political outpourings. Taliban's meteoric rise to power from Kandhar to the exclusion of all other factions in Afghanistan, has been a source of concern for its Central Asian neighbours. They fear a spill over of Taliban influence into their borders. But Anwarul Haq disagrees. "They (Central Asians) fear ethnic and sectarian strife to heat up in Afghanistan. Which will not be the case. Taliban do not believe in these things," he maintains.

Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia's persistent annoyance, with Pakistan over the Taliban phenomenon may account for the presence of students from these states in madrasas here.

But Haqqania is never to close its doors on those who come to learn and serve the cause of Islam. At the height of Russian invasion in Afghanistan, Haqqania was the hotbed of Mujahideen activities, fighting the Saur Revolution.

Maulana Abdul Haq used to address batches of Mujahideen before they could leave for Afghanistan to fight against Soviet army. Haqqania, says Anwarul Haq, was marked with a red spot on the Pakistani map maintained by the Soviets.

By the rise of Taliban from modest class rooms, Haqqania may prove to the students' movement what Eton was to the British army when it scored a win against the French at Waterloo.

Taliban take over Tagab, advance towards Bagram

News 980831

By Behroz Khan

PESHAWAR: Breaking the defence lines of the opposition alliance in Najrab district of Kapisa province Sunday, Taliban Islamic movement forces are advancing towards Bagram air base.

Taliban sources claimed fresh victories in the north of Kabul in Sunday's fighting as their forces moved into Tagab, taking complete control of the district which gives access to Mahmud-e-Eraqi in the north, the provincial capital of Kapisa and Bagram airbase in the west, still controlled by former defence minister of Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Masood.

The control of the hilltops in Tagab and Najrab overlooking Bagram by Taliban gives an edge to the student militia and bring the airbase in the range of their rockets. Taliban recently destroyed an opposition plane which tried to land at Bagram airbase during a night operation.

"Our forces have evicted the opposition from Tagab and are advancing towards Mahmud-e-Eraqi. The defence line of Najrab has been broken after a fierce fighting," said Abdul Ahad Jehangirwal, one of Taliban spokesman in Kandahar.

Taliban forces, Jehangirwal claimed have also captured six posts

from the opposition and were tightening the noose around the provincial capital of Kapisa. Another Taliban source in Peshawar claimed the capture of Mahmud-e-Eraqi is now almost certain after the defences of Najrab have been overrun. However, Taliban claims could not be confirmed by the opposition sources.

It is for the first time that Taliban forces have been able to encircle Bagram airbase from the west as the students militia had twice vacated the area since September 1996.

Cultivation of poppy on the increase in Afghanistan, UNDCP study reveals

ISLAMABAD (APP) - "Poppy cultivation showed a rising trend in Afghanistan as compared to previous year and it needs sustainable international action against illicit drug production."

According to the United Nation International Drugs Programme (UNDCP) study in 1998, 74 districts in 15 provinces are cultivating poppy crop. The main reasons pointed out by the study for this geographical expansion in poppy cultivation are, still unknown.

The study recommended to address the issues of interest to their development agenda including poverty, health, gender and environment and other alternative development plans, enforcement of law demand reduction initiatives and other steps.

This study seeks to explore the factors that facilitate the process of expansion in the context of Afghanistan, including increasing vulnerability, scattered land holdings, land tenure arrangements, reverse conditionalities, and the activities of traffickers and their intermediaries.

It is anticipated that by furthering our understanding of the process by which households enter into drug crop cultivation it will be possible to better target alternative development initiatives in order to satisfy both conventional development and drug control objectives.

Prior to 1998 there had been no

reports of poppy cultivation in Logar province and reports of only insignificant amounts restricted to Qarghayi district, Laghman province.

By mid April 1998 poppy had been found in 10 villages out of a total of 54 villages surveyed in Azro district. There was no evidence to suggest that these villages had cultivated poppy prior to 1998.

In Mehtarlam district 24 villages were found to be cultivating poppy. Key informants indicate that poppy cultivation is relatively insignificant in the majority of these villages with one or two households cultivating less than one *jerib* each.

The results from the UNDCP Annual Opium Poppy Survey indicate that 69.5 *jeribs* of opium poppy were cultivated in Mehtarlam this year, representing only 1.2% of the total cultivable land in those villages cultivating opium poppy. Village cultivation was found to range from one half of one *jerib* to 10 *jeribs*.

The highest intensity of opium poppy cultivation was in Bazal where 15 per cent of total village cultivable land was dedicated to poppy crop.

Although poppy cultivation has been reported in the districts of Alingar and Alisheng in Lagham it was not possible to visit these two districts due to security constraints.

According to the study interde-

pendent nature of labour markets and commercial trade between districts, combined with cross district ethnic and family links, has led to a high degree of exposure to poppy cultivation in both Lagham and Logar.

The prevalence of (opium) poppy in Hisarak, Sherzad and Khogiani and the labour intensive nature of the poppy harvest would seem to have provided significant employment opportunities for migrant labourers from Azro and other districts. However, for those migrants who were willing to travel further a field the climatic variations between (i) Shinwar, (ii) Sukhurud and Khogiani (iii) Sherzad and (iv) Hisarak offer the opportunity of security two months employment harvesting poppy.

Respondents indicated that harvesting requires a degree of experience to optimise the yield of the opium.

Identifying capsules ready for lancing requires squeezing each capsule between thumb and forefinger. To the inexperienced the difference between a ripe and an unripe capsule would appear neg-

ligible. Lancing too early is thought to significantly affect the final yield.

The poppy harvesters interviewed argued that insufficient income earning opportunities had prompted them to search for work in the poppy fields. All those interviewed were either landless or had insufficient land to satisfy their subsistence.

It was argued that the high cost of food items, clothing and medicines in Afghanistan, growing household sizes and a lack of on-farm and off-farm income earning opportunities had led to increasing expenditures and dwindling incomes.

Some respondents in Laghman suggested that the district administrator, the Woliswol, had given them sanction to cultivate poppy in 1997 but had not made any comment in 1998.

The Woliswol's silence was subsequently interpreted as implicit consent by the farmers to cultivate in 1998. Indeed, from the woliswol's office in Qarghayi it was possible to see poppy on three sides, the further field being a distance of only 400 metres.

Taliban step up efforts to recruit fighters

News 980901

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: Taliban have stepped up efforts to recruit fighters to join their forces planning assaults on the last opposition strongholds in Parwan, Kapisa, Badakhshan and Bamiyan provinces.

During a visit to Khost province in southern Afghanistan on Sunday, this correspondent heard about announcements being made in mosques seeking volunteers for the Taliban army. Young men from different parts of Khost were being encouraged to join the force which was scheduled to depart for Kabul Monday under the leadership of former mujahideen commander Mulla Jalaluddin Haqqani, who is presently minister of tribes and frontiers in the Taliban-led Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan.

"I expect to take along over 700 men to Kabul. Most of them are my former mujahideen and are well-versed in war," said Haqqani. He said most of the volunteers would be sent to frontlines north of Kabul while the

remaining would be deployed on the boundary between Wardak and Bamiyan provinces. "We need reinforcements in our active frontlines before taking on Ahmad Shah Massoud in Baghram, Charikar and Jabal-i-Siraj area and the Hezb-i-Wahdat in Bamiyan. Beside, Taliban forces have started encircling Massoud and the Hezb-i-Wahdat and would soon for the kill," he explained.

Young people wandering in Khost bazaar said many of them were willing to volunteer for the forthcoming Taliban battles. Black-turbaned Taliban claimed there was no coercion or temptations to stop young people from joining frontlines near Kabul.

Haqqani, who earned fame as a military commander in Khost during the Afghan "jehad", claimed the economic and military siege of Panjsher valley would eventually force former defence minister Ahmad Shah Massoud to evacuate to either Tajikistan or Iran. As for Bamiyan, he predicted an early fall of this Shia-populated province in central Afghanistan due to its siege from all sides.

NWFP orders closure of Afghans' clinics

News 980902

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Following the closure of Afghan universities and colleges, the Afghan Commissionate on Tuesday issued directives to close down private clinics and investigation outfits run by Afghan doctors.

A day earlier, the government of NWFP in an abrupt move, closed down the main universities in Peshawar which were owned and run by Afghan educationists.

To add more to the miseries of those Afghans who were attached with the health profession in one way or the other received yet another blow on Tuesday after the Afghan Refugee Commissionate issued directives to the district administrator for refugees to make sure the closure of all private clinics, investigation centres and medical stores run by them.

The move, it is believed, would

render a number of Afghan health professionals jobless who had been running their clinics since their migration to Pakistan. Such private clinics, clinical laboratories, X-ray plants, Ultrasound centres and hospitals were owned by Afghan doctors most of which were situated in the vicinities of refugee camps, at Nasirbagh, Kacha Garhi and other areas inhabited by the refugees.

It is worthwhile to mention here that the government closed the educational institutions on the grounds that these were operated without proper authorisation. After one day, the government also issued directives for closure of the health-care centres throughout the province.

There are also reports that the government was collecting information regarding the other business related activities of the refugees to pave the way for their repatriation to their own country, Afghanistan.

Osama funded no-trust move against her govt

Support to Taliban will be strategic death, says Benazir

Nation 980902

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD - Initiating debate on foreign policy in National Assembly, Leader of Opposition Benazir Bhutto on Monday said if the regime decided to sign the CTBT, it might get rid of sanctions, not the economic problems.

The Opposition Leader said the country had no policy and stood isolated in the world. "The priority of the government is to put Mullah Omar first," she said and added that the support to Taliban would be a strategic death as Iran and other friends had their apprehensions about Pakistan's support to Afghanistan.

Benazir Bhutto said Afghanistan was not our internal matter. "If we want to have strong relations with Iran and Central Asia, we should become neutral viz-a-viz Afghanistan and stop backing it."

Raising the issue of Iranian diplomats, Benazir said Pakistan should take necessary steps to ensure recovery of the diplomats. She criticized government's Afghan policy and said it was not good for Pakistan to go to country-to-country advocating that Afghan government be recognized. "Pakistan should give a 48-hour ultimatum to Taliban to release Iranian Diplomats."

She said Pakistan was facing a direct threat to its integrity, sovereignty and independence. "We are not a united nation. We stand divided on various issues."

She said the government failed to

take the people in confidence on every sensitive issue. "The people were not taken into confidence on nuclear detonation, freezing of foreign currency accounts, imposition of emergency and US missile attack on Afghanistan in violation of Pakistan's airspace."

Drawing a comparison between India and Pakistan, she said India was a self-reliant country but the followers of Zia had made Pakistan a 'client state'. She took strong exception to foreign visits of the Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif and the government to furnish the details of these visits in the House.

Benazir said it was time to give up tit-for-tat policy viz-a-viz India. "We should realize the changed situation and form our policies accordingly. Only a dynamic foreign policy can save Pakistan. We need a new vision."

She said the Foreign Office failed to take notice of the comments of the Indian Prime Minister on our internal matters. "They did not protest."

NNI adds: Benazir Bhutto said that she first heard the name of Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden when no-confidence motion was moved against her government in 1989.

The opposition leader said as prime minister she received reports that the Chief Minister of Punjab's move to dislodge her government was sponsored by a charity organization.

She said that later she came to know that in fact the money was transferred to Pakistan by Bin Laden who was against rulership of a woman.

Ms Bhutto said that Osama Bin Laden had sent funds to remove her from the government. She said that she also sent one of her ministers to Saudi Arabia at that time to know the facts.

The Opposition Leader said Iran has

always been Pakistan's close friend and had always supported Pakistan in different matters but now the present government's wrong policies are affecting our ties with Tehran. She said not only Iran but some of our close friends are also leaving us because of government's wrong policies.

She said now central Asian states and Russia are also parting ways with Pakistan. Benazir said it is ironic that State Minister for Foreign Affairs Sidique Khan Kanju did not mention arrest of Iranian diplomats in Afghanistan. She said newspapers have reported that one of the Iranian diplomats was killed by the Taliban.

"The Foreign Minister should let people know whether that diplomat is alive or dead," she said, adding the government should review its Afghan policy and should make arrangements for release of the Iranian diplomats. She said the government should use its influence on Taliban and give them ultimatum of 48 hours to release the diplomats.

The former Prime Minister said that our government not only recognized the Taliban but also sent delegations to other countries for their recognition. She said due to this, Pakistan lost some of its good friends and government's this policy also affected some very useful projects like oil pipeline and telecommunication plans.

Ms Bhutto said the Taliban issue is not Pakistan's internal issue but our government was dealing with it if it was the country's internal affair. "I'm surprised who is behind our foreign policy. This government cannot provide a well written speech to the Foreign Minister. The speech read by the Foreign Minister was useless and aimless," she further said.

The Opposition Leader told the Na-

tional Assembly that when her government took over in 1993, Pakistan was facing threat of rolling back the nuclear programme and the United States had withheld Pakistan's money. Moreover, she said Pakistan was on the verge of being declared a terrorist state but her government's policies averted these threats. Now, she said, the situation is completely different and Pakistan has been isolated by the world community.

She said that nuclear tests were a matter of proud for all Pakistanis but it is strange that it has divided the nation. First the country was divided in the name of Ehtesab then Kalabagh dam and now there is the 15th amendment, which is dividing the nation.

She said the rulers don't have the courage to accept that the nuclear programme was initiated by the late Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. "If Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and her daughter did not start this programme we neither had the nuclear capability nor we had Ghauri Missile," she said adding we started this programme with the masses' support. She said that Bhutto was rewarded with death for his services but she is not ashamed of it.

She said that India detonated the nuclear devices because she has a strong and self-reliant economy and she is a member of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) but Pakistan was mostly ruled by the military regimes. "The leaders who put the nation under the burden of heavy debts are today considered right."

She said the government was putting the country into crises one after the other. She strongly criticised Shahbaz Sharif's visit of the US saying it was his official visit which is a violation of the constitution that a chief minister is talking about the foreign policy.

Taliban decide to establish madrassa at US missile attack site

News 980904

By Bahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: The Taliban have decided to make use of the camps recently attacked by the US with Tomahawk cruise missiles by establishing a madrassa and a garrison there.

During a recent visit to Khost in southern Afghanistan, the provincial Taliban governor Syed Abdullah told this correspondent that the madrassa being set up in the Salman Farsi camp in Zhavara near the Pakistan border would be commissioned in a few days time. He also said the Al-Badr or so-called Arab camp, where the Arab volunteers used to put up, would now house a Taliban garrison.

Syed Abdullah claimed the Arabs, Pakistanis and Kashmiris based in the camps were leaving.

"We don't know their destination but I was told the Arab mujahideen were going towards Kabul," he informed. He thought some Arabs were already based near Kabul and those displaced from the Khost camps could join them there.

Shah Khan Gurbaz, a former mujahideen military commander who has now joined the Taliban, has been named as head of the new garrison. In an interview with The News in Khost, he informed that he had already shifted some of his troops and weapons to the camp and would make the garrison fully operational soon.

Mulla Jalaluddin Haqqani, who originally built the camps in Khost in the early 1980s, disputed the US claim that the camps had suffered substantial damage due to the airstrike. "The camps at Zhavara

survived two air and ground offensives by the Red Army and couldn't be captured or destroyed despite frequent air raids and shelling. What can about 60 or 70 long-range, largely-inaccurate American missiles do to a fortified place built into mountains?" he asked. He claimed the Salman Farsi camp has emerged largely unscathed and the Al-Badr camps, also known as Abu Jindal or the Arab camp, have suffered minimum damage. He conceded that the Khalid bin Waleed and Amir Muawiya camps had suffered some damage. He also claimed that the ammunition dumps in the camps were almost all intact.

Both Haqqani and Syed Abdullah denied that the Khost camps were used for military or terrorist training. They said Arabs, Pakistanis and Kashmiris who couldn't return to

their countries due to various reasons were mostly living in these camps. They said seminaries were being run in the camps and the five mosques built there offered religious services not only to the inmates of the camps but also Gurbaz villagers living in the vicinity. Haqqani recalled that he had built the Zhavara camp in the 1980s to house the first mujahideen radio station and in due course of time he set up a clinic, a madrassa, ammunition depots and also a workshop to repair damaged arms there. "At no time was the Zhavara camp used to impart military or terrorist training."

The Arabs, Pakistanis and Kashmiris came much later and set up base there. But even they never indulged in any terrorist activity," he contended.

NWFP govt closes all Afghan schools in Peshawar

Nation 980902

From Our Correspondent

PESHAWAR — After closing down four Afghan universities, the NWFP government Tuesday also decided to close all Afghan schools in Peshawar and other parts of the province.

Some highly placed sources told *The Nation* that District Magistrates have been directed to ask owners and management of the private Afghan schools to stop functioning with immediate effect. In this connection, owners of a number of Afghan schools have confirmed receiving notices from the authorities concerned.

Surprisingly, without taking the Afghan Refugees Commission into confidence, the NWFP Government launched a drive against the Afghan educational institutions. An officer from Afghan Refugees Commission when contacted said that he knew about closure of four universities through Press reports on Tuesday. Similarly, he was ignorant when questioned about a latest move of the provincial government against primary and middle schools where children of the war-displaced Afghan families are getting education.

The NWFP government is yet to

disclose the reasons for closures of these institutions but some of the officers say that previous week's demonstrations arranged by the Afghan nationals against America has provided an opportunity to the government to take such steps. On August 21 the Afghans residing in Nasar Bagh and Katcha Garhi Refugee Camps staged a demonstration and the peaceful procession became violent when some of the protestors insisted on staging a sit-in in front of the USA Consulate General.

In retaliation, the police used force against such protestors, which led to a direct confrontation between the angry Afghan protestors and personnel of law enforcing agencies which continued for around six hours. On the same day at Speen Jamaat, the Afghan students staged a similar protest demo and after handing over a memorandum to UNHCR representatives these students dispersed peacefully. But some of the Press reporters and personnel of law enforcing agencies reported that Katcha Garhi and Nasar Bagh protestors were students and in the light of such misreporting the NWFP government took such a drastic decision which resulted unrest among the already war affected Af-

ghans.

Meanwhile, the officers from Afghan Refugees Commissionate confirmed initiation of a drive against illegal clinics of fake and non-qualified doctors in refugees camps throughout NWFP. The officer concerned said that number of clinics, is between 500 to 600 and 80 per cent of them are owned by fake and non-qualified doctors which is causing severe problems to the Afghan nationals.

In this connection, the officer informed that Afghan Refugees Commissionate had directed all District administrators to serve notices to owners and doctors of these clinics. Only qualified doctors like MBBS and MD degree holders would be allowed to run clinics in the camps.

An Afghan national when contacted, said that through such steps, the NWFP government wants to repatriate the Afghan nationals. Removal of Chief Secretary Rustam Shah Mohammad was a part of the game through which at the behest of Taliban leaders the host government forced the Afghan nationals to leave for their war affected motherland. Since long the government functionaries are discouraging treatment of the Afghan nationals in government-run hospitals.

Vacant seat formula on Afghanistan urged

ISLAMABAD (APP) —

Pakistan urged the United Nations to adopt the vacant seat formula as a first step to increase its credibility among Afghan factions. "It is important for the UN to adopt the vacant seat formula as a first step towards increasing its credibility among the Afghan parties," Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Muhammad Siddique Kanju said in the National Assembly on Monday. Presently, the Afghans are represented at the UN by a Northern Alliance envoy. The Northern Alliance has been routed by the Taliban recently and its influence is confined to a small territory. On the other hand, the Taliban, who captured Kabul in 1996, and are recognised by Pakistan, control nearly 95 per cent area of Afghanistan.

FP 980902

Missing-diplomats have probably been killed: Taliban

TEHERAN (DPA) — Iranian diplomats being held in Afghanistan have "most probably been killed", a spokesman of the ultra-Islamic Taliban group told the Teheran daily Abrar Saturday.

"The Iranian diplomats have most probably been killed by Taliban forces who, however, acted outside their orders," Taliban spokesman Mowlavi Vakil Ahmad Motavakel told the daily in an exclusive telephone interview, a copy of which was sent to the Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa bureau in Teheran.

The spokesman blamed the opposition forces of ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani for the incident as "the Iranians had in fact no permission to enter Afghan soil".

He added however that the Taliban was willing to talk to Iran on the issue but gave no further details on the agenda. He also gave no information about the rest of the hostages whose number is said to be more than 70.

Several officials in Iran had implied that the Iranian diplomats may have already been killed by Taliban forces when the group last month captured the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif and stormed the Iranian consulate in that city.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi, however, denied the speculation earlier this week, saying the diplomats were still alive.

Iran says the Taliban holds more than 78 hostages. These are said to include 11 diplomats, a reporter of the official Iranian news agency IRNA, 35 truck drivers and a number of relief workers.

Nation 980902

Iranian diplomats issue

News 980901

Benazir asks govt to break ties with Taliban

By Mariana Baabar

ISLAMABAD: Leader of Opposition Benazir Bhutto has called for breaking off relations with the Taliban-led government in Kabul if they failed to release the Iranian diplomats.

"Are we going to put Mulla Omar first or Iran? Why not tell the Taliban to release the Iranians or else we will break off relations with them," Benazir said Monday while taking part in the National Assembly debate on foreign policy.

She added: "Iran has always stood by Pakistan and provided us with strategic depth. Any attack on our friends is an attack on us. Give the Taliban 48 hours and tell them that unless they produce the Iranian diplomats, we will break off relations with them."

Speaking for more than an hour, Ms Bhutto spoke passionately for reassessment of the foreign policy to stop Pakistan becoming isolated.

"Not only are we being isolated, there is also direct threat to our integrity, sovereignty and independence," she warned.

Ms Bhutto did not mince her words when she said that Pakistan's policy on Afghanistan has failed and since Afghanistan is not our internal matter, we should only restrict ourselves to advise them.

She said the possibility of Iranians seeking a similar pattern to that of the US attack on Afghanistan could not be ruled out. "This is a serious and significant development."

Ms Bhutto alleged that it was Osama bin Laden who had sent in money to Nawaz Sharif from Saudi Arabia when he was Punjab chief minister, to buy members when a vote of no confidence was moved against her in 1989.

"Nawaz Sharif was told by the Americans that they would strike inside Afghanistan. Sharif gave the Americans permission and at the same time tipped off Osama. What are Nawaz Sharif's relations with Osama?" she asked.

She said that at the time she had sent someone to Saudi Arabia and discovered that it was not the government there but Osama who was supporting Sharif.

Turning to Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif's visit to Washington, Ms Bhutto criticised the Foreign Office for funding it. "This is high treason to send only one chief minister to talk about the CTBT. What message are you sending to smaller provinces. This is the republic of Pakistan not the family corporation of Abbajji or Bhajji," she said.

On the recent US cruise missile attack, Ms Bhutto said that Nawaz Sharif was taken into confidence and thanked by President Clinton. "The US has a right to self defence but it should have gone to the UN. Why did not Nawaz Sharif take the people into confidence?" she asked.

Turning to government's decision to sign the CTBT, Ms Bhutto said that it was not doing so from a high moral ground but from the bottom of the barrel. "We will 'get' only lollipops after signing this. We are suffering not because of sanctions but because of Nawaz Sharif," she argued.

The leader of opposition said that time had come for Pakistan to realise that it cannot have a foreign policy larger than its economic status. "The people should not worry about the missile attack because it is diplomatic and political initiatives which can save Pakistan's self respect and honour. We need a new foreign policy," she insisted. Ms Bhutto asked angrily why the Foreign Office did not summon the Indian high commissioner when Vajpayee commented on the process of Islamisation, which was a completely internal matter of Pakistan?

Several officials in Iran had implied that the Iranian diplomats may have already been killed by Taliban forces when the group last month captured the northern Afghan city of Mazar-e-Sharif and stormed the Iranian consulate in that city.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmud Mohammadi, however, denied the speculation earlier this week, saying the diplomats were still alive.

Iran says the Taliban holds more than 78 hostages. These are said to include 11 diplomats, a reporter of the official Iranian news agency IRNA, 35 truck drivers and a number of relief workers.

US had hoped Osama to be at the attacked camp

News 980903

WASHINGTON: President Bill Clinton's top military and intelligence team told lawmakers they had hoped suspected Saudi dissident Osama bin Laden would be at the Afghan camp during last month's US cruise missile strike.

The briefing in a secure room on the fourth floor of the Capitol Hill came amid questions about whether the Shifa Pharmaceutical Plant in Khartoum, Sudan, was a legitimate target of the strike.

The administration officials told more than 25 senators that they had hoped that Bin Laden would be among the attendees in a gathering at Bin Laden's alleged network the day of the strike. "It was fully possible he would have been there," Senator Richard Lugar said Tuesday after the briefing by CIA director George Tenet, Defence Secretary William Cohen, and air force Gen Joseph Ralston, vice chairman of the joint chiefs of staff.

Administration officials have publicly sidestepped the question of whether Bin Laden himself was a target of the strike, saying that the Aug 20 terrorist strike was meant to weaken Bin Laden's network. Lawmakers have been less restrained, and Lugar told the administration team that, having failed to eliminate Bin

Laden in the August strike, "he ought to be pursued instantly and found and his influence should be terminated. This has to do with the safety of Americans."

According to an attendee at Tuesday's briefing, the intelligence indicated that Bin Laden himself was likely to attend a leadership meeting at the Afghan camps. Following the strike, Bin Laden's followers announced that the Saudi multimillionaire was alive and well. US intelligence was unable to confirm that Bin Laden had, in fact, been at the Afghan camps. The FBI investigation into the Aug 7 bombings of US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania has turned up multiple alleged participants who have named Bin Laden as the mastermind of the attack. Of greater concern were reports, including threats by Bin Laden himself, of further retaliatory action against the United States.

Several senators of both parties said they were satisfied with the evidence linking the pharmaceutical plant to Bin Laden. "The attack was justified both at the plant and the camp," said Sen. Bob Smith. "They made a compelling case," said Sen. Jack Reed. "We all went in with questions in mind. I would describe it as a very thorough briefing which an-

swered a lot of questions before they were asked."

Some remained skeptical. "I am more satisfied with the rationale behind the Afghan site than I am with the pharmaceutical plant," said Sen. Robert Bennett, Utah.

Tenet described how a field operative recruited by the CIA got into the plant grounds in Khartoum, evaded guards, went to a predetermined location and scooped up a soil sample from a specific part of the complex. That sample, when examined by a private US laboratory that regularly works for the CIA showed 2 1/2 times what would be considered a "trace" presence of the chemical empta, a substance with no known use other than as a key ingredient in the deadly nerve agent VX. The operative, upon handing the sample over to the CIA, submitted to "repeated" polygraph tests to verify that he had performed the mission as outlined. US intelligence had examined the shifa plant's internet site before the strike and found no evidence that any pharmaceuticals were being produced or sold, while internet sites for other Sudanese drug plants did contain such lists. Cohen conceded to the senators that the evidence linking Bin Laden to the Shifa plant "was a little tenuous, but it's getting stronger." —AP

Taliban despatch reinforcements to Herat, Nemroz

FP By M.T. ALAM 980906

PESHAWAR — The Taliban administration Saturday despatched fresh reinforcement to Herat and Nemroz provinces bordering Iran where massive military exercises of the latter have been continuing for the past many days.

More than 800 fighters fully equipped with sophisticated weaponry having support of armoured personnel carriers were sent from different areas to Herat and Nemroz, reported the Peshawar-based Sahaar News Agency.

The deployment arrangements were continued from early Saturday morning till late in the evening, the agency said.

The Taliban administration has also supplied in huge quantity arms and ammunition to those hardline militia fighters who have been stationed since long in these provinces.

Apparently, Taliban have taken the step to quell a possible rebellion of Iran-backed elements in these bordering provinces.

The Taliban officials, the agency said while quoting certain sources, had been receiving information that Iran was equipping the pro-Rabbani and pro-Ismail—the former governor of Herat province—elements in these provinces to stage a rebellion there against the Taliban rule.

Next 36 hours are being considered very crucial by the Taliban administration as what the Sahaar News Agency claimed, quoting Taliban that during this period a large scale rebellion might sweep across Herat and Nemroz.

Taliban gain more ground near Bamyan

By AMAL KHAN 980906

PESHAWAR — Taliban forces Tuesday made further gains in their march on the central Bamyan province, a stronghold of Iran-backed Shiite Hizb-i-Wahdat, by capturing about 30 kilometer area in Wardak province.

According to reports, after a heavy attack on opposition forces, the Taliban warrior Tuesday succeeded to break the first defence line of opposition in Wardak province and moved further close to Bamyan, the last bastion of pro-Iran Hizb-i-Wahdat. The student militia captured some strategically important areas, including Siana and Tezak in Jalriz area of Wardak. Bamyan is under complete siege which now controls all important roads leading to the city.

The residents of besieged Bamyan, historical city in central Afghanistan, are currently facing enormous difficulties and acute food shortage.

noted that it might be one of the reasons for Taliban's slow offensive against the opposition in the country's northeastern Badakhshan Province and in central Afghanistan.

More than 70,000 Iranian elite Revolutionary Guards staged massive war games in which ground forces backed by air force warplanes, military tanks and other heavy weapons participated. The war games took place at a time when Tehran has declared that the military exercises were necessitated by "unstable" conditions on its eastern borders with Afghanistan. It did not mince words in declaring that it would use every possible means, including the use of force against Taliban for the release of its missing diplomats and a journalist.

The latest situation took an ugly turn on Monday last when founder of Taliban movement Mullah Mohammad Omar, during a radio interview, denied the Iranian charge, saying the missing diplomats might have been killed at the hands of low-grade student militia troops without the knowledge of their leaders.

His comments invited an angry reaction from Tehran which termed Omar's statement as "unacceptable". The same tone and tenor was echoed by the Commander of Iranian Revolutionary Guards last week while announcing Iran's largest-ever military maneuvers close to Afghan border.

Babar admits training Taliban

News 980908

GURANWALA — Former interior minister Naseerullah Babar has said that under his guidance the Taliban were trained in 1994.

Addressing a rally to mark the Defence Day, he said that he was interior minister in 1994, when under his tutelage the student militia was given training.

He hoped that Islamic Shariah would be enforced in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. This triangle would foil the Zionist designs, he remarked.

But the former minister added that late prime minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was the moving force behind the Afghan jihad in 1973. He regretted that the late prime minister has never been given due regard for his contribution to Afghan crusade. Selfish elements, he said, were taking the credit

He disclosed that ZA Bhutto gave

refuge to Ahmad Shah Masud, Gulbuddin Hikmatyar, Burhanuddin Rabani and their companions. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto at that time realised the fact that Russian influence had been increasing and it had made up to taking over Afghanistan. So over the directives of ZA Bhutto in 1973, the training of Afghan mujahideen was started and he (Babar) himself imparted them training. Taliban were also given military training when I was interior minister in 1994, he admitted.

The former minister said Pakistan's armed forces were capable of repelling any foreign aggression and in case India attacked Pakistan, it would face counter attack from Pakistani nation, along with five lac Afghans resulting in the disintegration of that country.—NNI

Osama bin Laden under Taliban house arrest: report

Taliban deny being trained by Pakistan

By M.T. ALAM

PESHAWAR : The Consulate General of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan in Peshawar has dispelled impression created by a statement of a former interior minister that the Taliban were taken an active part in the jihad against the Soviet forces and the former USSR installed regimes in Afghanistan.

A communiqué issued here on Wednesday addressing the former interior minister Naseerullah Khan Babar, said the Taliban movement was exclusively indigenous and the Taliban fighters were the sons of Afghanistan. "Almost all the Taliban had taken an active part in the jihad against the Soviet forces and the former USSR installed regimes in Afghanistan," the communiqué said. Having a long war-experience, the Taliban then launched a struggle for the establishment of Islamic system and to restore the lost pride of the Afghan nation, it said.

The supreme objective before the Taliban was to proper working of a Shariah-based system and maintenance of peace in Afghanistan, the communiqué said. adding the Taliban had been succeeded in ensuring the sovereignty and solidarity of their motherland.

"Neither we believe in interference in others matters nor we can allow others to meddle in our affairs. We wish to keep friendly and cordial relations with all our neighbours and rest of the world," the communiqué said.

It added that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan was respecting the sovereignty of others and in return hoped that the others would respect Afghanistan's sovereign status and rights of its people.

Taliban formally receive US 'offer'

By AIMAL KHAN

PESHAWAR : The Taliban government at last has received a US government letter, which it had earlier refused to entertain few days back, highly-placed sources confided to The Frontier Post Thursday.

The sources said the Afghan embassy in Islamabad had formally received the official communication from the Clinton Administration on August 28, which was immediately despatched to Kandahar, the Taliban movement's headquarters in southern Afghanistan, for consideration of its top leadership.

Earlier, a few days ago the Taliban acting ambassador to Pakistan Maulvi Saeedur Rehman Haqqani had refused to receive a senior official of the US embassy in Islamabad, who visited his office to deliver the US government letter.

However, the sources said, on August 28 last when an unidentified US embassy official in Islamabad approached the Afghan embassy for the second

time with a request to meet the acting Afghan Ambassador Aga, ambassador Haqqani reportedly refused to meet him. The American visitor was reportedly asked by the Afghan embassy staff as to what was the purpose of his meeting, to which they were informed that he wanted to deliver a letter from the US government to the Taliban rulers.

Later, instead of the ambassador, a low-ranking embassy official was sent to receive the letter from the American visitor, the sources added.

Though contents of the letter were not officially released, but the sources said the US government had clarified its position in the letter, maintaining that the last month missile strikes on the alleged terrorist bases of Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden in eastern Afghanistan were not targeted at the Afghans rather the terrorists operating from their country.

The sources claimed that the Americans had even offered the Taliban government that if it put

certain restrictions on the activities of Saudi dissident Osama Bin Laden, Washington would recognise their government, besides a "very attractive" developmental package for the war-ravaged country.

Presently, only three countries namely, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE, recognise the Taliban government.

Meanwhile, reports reaching here from across the border Thursday suggested that the Taliban movement's founder Mullah Mohammad Omar was consulting members of his supreme Shoura on the US offer.

Afghan sources believed that Taliban might not immediately respond positively to the US offer due to severe public backlash witnessed after the August 20 US missile strikes on Khost area of Afghanistan.

It may be recalled that during a visit to Afghanistan earlier this US official Bill Richardson that Osama Bin Laden had been asked not to use the Afghan soil

for anti-US operations. Similarly, about two months back when Saudi interior minister Prince Turkey Al-Faisal visited Afghanistan, he too was also communicated the same message.

Afghan sources here claimed that Taliban leadership was divided over the Osama issue. "The division existed in the past too but it has come to the fore after the US strikes," claimed the sources. They said Mullah Omar too was not happy with some of Osama's activities, including his to the international media by him before and after the US attacks. Omar had said during a recent radio interview that there could not be two government's in Afghanistan at the same time, a curt reference to the rise of Osama and his increasing popularity with which the Taliban leadership seems uncomfortable.

London-based Al-Quds al-Arabi, told the BBC he had spoken to bin Laden and the Saudi dissident had told him he was under house arrest near the southern city of Kandahar.

Abdel-Bari Atwan, editor of the London-based Al-Quds al-Arabi, told the BBC he had spoken to bin Laden and the Saudi dissident had told him he was under house arrest near the southern city of Kandahar.

Atwan, said "I believe the Taliban movement was extremely angry because he was in touch with the press... so because of that they put him under house arrest and also to protect them from any American raids," said Atwan.

The United States accused bin Laden of masterminding the twin bombings of its embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam on August 7 which killed 257 people.

It responded by launching cruise missile attacks on training bases allegedly run by bin Laden in Afghanistan.

The Taliban Islamic militia, which controls more than 90 percent of Afghanistan, has consistently refused requests to hand over bin Laden to the United States... insisting he is an honoured guest in the country.

Taliban leader Mullah Mohammad Omar later censured bin Laden for making "threatening statements" against Americans around the world and said he had been warned not to leave in political of military activity from Afghan soil.

However, Atwan said bin Laden had renewed threats against the United States and President Bill Clinton. "He told us that he was safe and well, and also that he will answer Mr. Clinton with deeds and action.

"I believe the man has been attacked by the Americans, and usually when he threatens he delivers. So I think he is serious this time, and we should take this threat as seriously as we can," said Atwan.

The exiled bin Laden, stripped by

the Taliban of his citizenship, comes from a wealthy Saudi construction family.

He is hailed by his supporters in Afghanistan, Pakistan and other Moslem

sum of the missiles and arms and

ammunition stockpiles which the Taliban had taken into possession when Mazar-i-Sharif and Shabarghan were fell to them in the beginning of August.

The Taliban have arranged more than 50 trucks to shift the seized missiles and other kind of arms and ammunition to Qandahar, the agency reported. The Afghan sources in Peshawar have, however, told that when the war in Afghanistan against the former red army troops was at its peak during 1987-88, the Soviet government had dumped in Khyber area a heavy cache of arms and ammunition. This weaponry was brought here through land route on 500 trucks, the sources said.

Meanwhile, three weekly newspapers run by the Shia Hizbe Wahdat factions of Afghanistan in Peshawar have stopped publication due to shortage of funds.

The Shia Hizbe Wahdat Khalili, Akbari and Mohsinai factions were respectively publishing Imroz-i-Ma, Seem-i-Wahdat and Tulu-i-Sabz from Peshawar. These were the computerised and properly funded these publications printed Persian language papers. However, with the fall of Mazar-i-Sharif to Taliban on August 8 last, these papers stopped appearing in the public. The Shia factions were the followers of Ismaili sect have their sizeable concentration in Badakshan province of Afghanistan, southern areas of Tajikistan, Chitral and Karachi in Pakistan and many of the provinces of India particularly in Mumbai. According to another report the Taliban authorities in Baghlan province have started shifting heavy stockpiles of Skud, Luna and Oragan missiles which they had seized after occupying this Ismaili militia controlled province about a week ago.

Maulvi Khairullah Khan Talibawa, the interior minister of Taliban regime told the Peshawar based

Sohar News Agency from Khyber

province on satellite telephone that

the quantity of these deadly mis-

siles which the Taliban had seized

in Khyber was more than the gross

Taliban blast spiritual symbol

By M.T. ALAM

PESHAWAR : The hardline Taliban fighters are reported to have dynamited a statue of an Eagle in Darra-i-Kiyān of Baghlan province in war ravaged Afghanistan on last Thursday.

The Eagle statue was installed in the spiritual centre of Ismaili sect people in Kiyān which fell to Taliban about a week ago. Almost two decades back, the statue of Eagle was constructed with a cost of more than 40 million Afghan by the deposed King Zahīr Shah government in Kiyān area of Baghlan province.

The Taliban blasted the Eagle symbol with dynamits and bombs because in their opinion the making of statue of any living being falls under idolatry which is repugnant to the basic principles of Islam. About a week ago the Taliban religious fighters had defeated the Ismaili militia of General Imanoor Nadri in this area. The general was later fled to Bamiyan province where the Iran-backed Shia Hizbe Wahdat group is horn-locked with students militia fighters.

It is to be mentioned here that the followers of Ismaili sect have their sizeable concentration in

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Afghanistan, southern areas of Tajikistan, Chitral and Karachi in Pakistan and many of the provinces of India particularly in Mumbai.

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activity.

Life goes from bad to worse in Kabul

KABUL: A poor family, hoping for a few coins, tries to sell what little they have left: chipped cups and saucers, an ornate vase and broken kitchen appliances little better than the row of derelict refrigerators others have dumped nearby.

No one gives their meager wares a second glance. Everyone is selling something in Afghanistan's battered capital. But no one is buying. Outside a carpet shop — really an old railroad freight car — bearded men sit sipping sweet green tea and putting lazily on their cigarettes.

They seem to be there out of habit, rather than in any real hope of a customer turning up. Since 1996, Kabul has been in the hands of the Taliban religious army which controls roughly 90 percent of the country. The militia, known for its strict form of Islam, is battling a coalition of

northern-based armies, mostly small parties representing ethnic groups.

The only shoppers on Kabul's dust-clogged streets are "women, dressed in the all-enveloping burqas, who sail past the ramshackle shops. Occasionally, the women pause for a heartbeat or two, and only then to buy food. Cars are scarce. Most people ride bicycles. "It just keeps going from bad to worse," complains Ismailullah, a young man with a wispy black beard and starched blue shalwar kameez, the loose pants and dress-length shawl favoured in the region. People seem confused that their old friend, the United States, which aided Afghan rebels who ousted a Soviet-backed government, would fire missiles at their country.

They seem unaware that the Aug.

20 strike was actually aimed at suspected training camps, about 90

miles (145 kilometers) southeast of Kabul, funded by Saudi millionaire dissident Osama bin Laden. "We need help and instead the Americans fire missiles at us," said Ismailullah. The stench from an open sewer waits inside the decrepit dugout where Ismailullah is passing time with his friend, Saeed Zabiullah. Zabiullah hasn't gotten around to cleaning up after the opposition forces' last rocket strike, which smashed his counter and sprayed bits of glass over the few medicines on display.

Business is bad, says Zabiullah. But he refuses to blame the hard-line Taliban, and he says both good and bad have come of the Taliban's rule of Kabul. The Taliban's strict religious rule has been relatively peaceful, putting an end to four years of rocket attacks by rival Islamic groups that left the city in ruins and killed 50,000

people. Corruption and crime, once widespread, have all but disappeared because of the Taliban's severe Islamic punishments. Theft, for example, is punished by chopping off a culprit's limb. "That was good," said Saeed. "But America is an educated country with smart people and computers. Are they crazy?" he says. "Why do they do this? We have nothing." The Taliban's protocol officer, Abdul Sattar Pakts, said the international community has never given the country's religious rulers a chance. —AP

Taliban reject AI report of ethnic cleansing

ISLAMABAD (CNN) — Taliban have rejected the Amnesty International report about ethnic cleansing in the northern town of Mazar-i-Sharif and termed it as a move to defame the Islamic militia.

"The Amnesty report is totally baseless and has nothing to do with facts," Afghan Ambassador Maulvi Saeedur Rahman said.

Talking to this Agency, the Afghan envoy said that teams of International Committee of the Red Cross visited Mazar-i-Sharif after

Taliban overran the town and did not report killing of the opponents.

The ICRC, he said, had reported

normacy in the town.

"The Amnesty International has earned bad name for itself by levelling accusations against the Afghan Islamic Emirate," Haqqani said. He said commanders of the opposition alliance had killed thousands of Taliban supporters in northern Afghanistan but "Amirul Momineen, announced general amnesty for the people in northern Afghanistan."

He said people belonging to Pushroon, Tajik, Uzbek, Turkmen, Nooristani, Peshayee and Hazaras are showing loyalties to Taliban forces as they are satisfied with the policies of Islamic Emirate.

Haqqani said the Amnesty International report is based on investigation of an Iranian-born Abbas Faiz, who is "biased" towards

Unocal suspends gas pipeline plan thru Afghanistan

ISLAMABAD (APP) - Unocal Corp., the California-based global energy company that has been courting the Taliban government that controls most of Afghanistan, announced it was suspending its activities involving the proposed Central Asia gas pipeline there.

According to Washington Post correspondent Nora Boustany, the announcement came one day after the dramatic U.S. strikes against training bases in Afghanistan for followers of Saudi renegade Osama bin Laden.

The Taliban and Unocal were hoping to build a \$4.5 billion pipeline network to transport Caspian Sea oil and gas across Afghanistan to the Indian subcontinent. But the position statement released Aug. 21 said:

"Unocal will only participate in construction of the proposed Central Asia Gas Pipeline when and if Afghanistan achieves the peace and stability necessary to obtain financing from international lending agencies for this project and an established government is recognized by the United Nations and the United States."

Although work on the pipeline itself had not yet begun, last November Unocal launched a \$900,000 program run by the University of Nebraska at Omaha to train 137 Afghan men in pipeline-building.

Sources in the White House, which had been pushing the multi-billion-dollar pipeline project that would have transported gas from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan's Arabian Sea coast, acknowledged that the plans have been scrapped for now.

The Clinton administration had strongly supported the proposed route, which would have freed new Central Asian countries from dependence on Russia for exporting their natural gas — and avoided alternative routes across Iran to bring badly needed energy to Pakistan and India.

There must be a multiplicity of reasons for putting all this on hold, at least one of them being that Pakistan, for one, may be too cash-

strapped to pay for the gas until it sorts out its economic restructuring and payment schedules with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

On a much more basic level, it would be difficult to imagine that international investors would dump billions of dollars into a project going through areas that may be subject to cruise-missile attacks, to say nothing of the fighting between the Taliban and its opponents — a beleaguered northern alliance of factions allegedly getting help from Iran and Russia.

Pakistan's ambassador, Riaz Khokhar, told Washington Post editors and reporters, on the day of the U.S. strike against bin Laden's bases, that despite allegations that his country backs the Taliban, Pakistan could not bring any pressure against the radical movement. "We don't share their social philosophy, but we are in no position to influence them," Khokhar insisted.

"You left us with the baby, so we are looking after the baby," he said somewhat bitterly of the mess left behind in Afghanistan after the United States and Pakistan collaborated in helping Afghan rebels expel Soviet troops between 1979 and '89. "We have been partners, we joined hands [with the United States]. Now we are saddled with the problem," he added.

Recalling that Pakistani authorities had been instrumental in delivering terrorists such as Ramzi Ahmed Yousef and Mir Aimal Kansi to the United States, Khokhar said: "They were hot stuff you people wanted. You got them because we cooperated. But in this game we have to take care of our own interests." He explained that the Taliban are ethnic Pashtuns, and that millions of Pashtuns live in the regions that straddle the Pakistani-Afghan border.

There is cultural affinity and relations between them, he added. "We have a very finely defined and balanced policy," the ambassador said in spelling out why the Pakistani government could not do anything to provoke a backlash from its own Pashtun population.

sands of rockets land on our heads," said the survivor of a four-year civil war that left much of his hometown in ruins. He doesn't know Bin Laden, blamed by the United States for financing attacks on American embassies in eastern Africa that killed 258 people. Nor does he understand why the United States would attack Afghanistan in a failed bid to kill Bin Laden. He said his own country's opposing sides fire rockets at each other because "they are ignorant and want only power."

"But America is an educated country with smart people and computers. Are they crazy?" he says. "Why do they do this? We have nothing." The Taliban's protocol officer, Abdul Sattar Pakts, said the international community has never given the country's religious rulers a chance. —AP

Student militia leader killed in Bamiyan fighting

News 980913

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: A senior Taliban leader and governor of Ghazni province, Mulla Yar Mohammad, has been killed in the ongoing battle for the capital city of Bamiyan.

Meanwhile, Taliban sources in Kabul and Peshawar said the Taliban had begun a three-pronged attack on Bamiyan and were making progress on all fronts. They said the offensive was started from the Ghazni and Wardak side, from Kot Aqabat, and from Tola-i-Burqa in Bagan province. The Taliban sources also said that efforts were still being made to convince Bamiyan's defenders to lay down their arms and prevent further bloodshed.

On the other hand the Peshawar-based Sahar News Service reported that Ghazni's Governor Mulla Yar Mohammad was killed three days earlier, senior Taliban leader Mulla Wakil Ahmad had said that severe fighting was going on at Kot

Continued from Page 1
Bamiyan fighting

Arabat in Bamiyan. He said fall of this strategic pass would open the way for the Taliban to head for the capital city of Bamiyan.

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ernments backing the Taliban must make clear that human rights violations will not be tolerated", the London-based group said.

Tens of thousands of Hazara people in Bamyan province were at risk of deliberate and arbitrary killings by advancing Taliban forces", a statement said.

Taliban spokesman rejected the first Amnesty report, saying it was based on the reports of anti-Taliban elements.

A spokesman for the fundamentalist militia said last week that it was against the Taliban's religion to kill civilians.

The UNHCR statement came as Tehran vowed Friday to exact revenge for the murder of nine Iranian diplomats by Taliban soldiers in Mazar-i-Sharif and threatened to use force against the militia, as tens of thousands of troops massed near the Afghan border.

Taliban soldiers captured the key northern city from the opposition alliance, which includes the pro-Iranian Hezb-i-Wahdat faction.

The Hazara originated from the isolated Hazarajat areas of central Afghanistan and are a downtrodden minority.

Desperate for jobs many began migrating from their homes in mountainous areas to major cities, particularly Kabul, where they were given low jobs which other groups were reluctant to do.

UN confirms ethnic cleansing in Afghanistan

(Continued from Page 1)

Countries bordering

Afghanistan had been asked to open their frontiers to let in refugees, most of whom are Hazara who had fled the Mazar-i-Sharif region since the massacres, he said.

Witness reports said that the Taliban had carried out "indiscriminate" killings in the streets of the Hazara quarter of Mazar on the day the city was captured.

The killings continued the following day as Taliban execution squads went from house to house murdering families, Colville said.

Some witnesses said the Taliban

had during the next few days taken

Hazara people in containers on the back of trucks to neighbouring regions, the UNHCR said. Those who did not suffocate during the journey were then executed.

Colville said that the exact

length of the massacres "is not

very clear," adding that according

to information obtained by the

UNHCR the situation in Mazar

Hazara were continuing.

Amnesty International first al-

leged last week that the Taliban

was now calmer but arrests of

Hazara were continuing.

On Friday, in a new statement,

Amnesty warned that the Taliban

could be poised to execute thou-

sands more Hazara civilians.

"The international community

and in particular the foreign gov-

ernments backing the Taliban

must make clear that human rights

violations will not be tolerated",

the London-based group said.

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UN fact-finding mission to visit Afghanistan

Nation 80916

ISLAMABAD (APP) - United Nations is organizing a fact-finding mission to be sent to Afghanistan to determine the fate of Iranian diplomats who went missing after the fall of Mazar-e-Sharif to Taliban troops last month, UN sources in Islamabad said on Wednesday. "UN Secretary-General's office is organizing a mission," a UN official told APP on condition of anonymity. "You have to contract the Secretary-General's office in New York," the official said when asked about the composition of the proposed UN mission.

A UN spokesman in New York announced Tuesday that Secretary General Kofi Annan has engaged in discussions regarding the status of 10 missing Iranian diplomats and a correspondent of state-run IRNA news agency.

Iran accuses Taliban of holding dozens of its nationals hostage since capturing Mazar-e-Sharif from beleaguered northern alliance on August 8.

Taliban authorities confirmed that some 40 Iranian drivers were in their custody but denied that they had detained Iranian diplomats and IRNA reporter. Taliban administration last week released five Iranian prisoners as a mark of good gesture following hectic diplomatic efforts by Pakistan to stave off possibility of any confrontation between the two neighbouring Muslim nations. Taliban and Iran had agreed on a tripartite mission including representatives from both sides and Pakistan to visit Mazar-e-Sharif to look into the matter.

Anti-Taliban alliance seizes control of Badakhshan

Nation 980918

TEHRAN (AFP) - An alliance of anti-Taliban forces has seized an important region in northern Afghanistan, taking near-complete control of Badakhshan province and flushing out the Islamic militia, Iran's official news agency IRNA reported Thursday.

The agency, quoting Afghan sources, said the forces of opposition commander Ahmad Shah Masood had completed their operations in Badakhshan on Wednesday after capturing the entire region of Raq.

Masood's forces had launched an offensive to capture Raq last weekend.

With Raq's seizure, the alliance now controls virtually all of Badakhshan province in northeastern Afghanistan.

Taliban release Dostum man after ten months

News 780711
By Rahimullah Yusufzai

was kept in the intelligence agency formerly Khad, prison and was neither provided radio nor papers. Visitors were not allowed and meeting other prisoners, who included former Herat governor Ismail Khan, was almost impossible," he recalled.

Turkistani said he was so much cut-off from the world that he came to know about the fall of northern Afghanistan only at the time of his release.

Turkistani said he became a pawn in the struggle between the Taliban and Gen Dostum. "The Taliban were keen for the release of men from Kandahar, Helmand and Urozgan provinces from where the Taliban movement emerged. Gen Dostum, on the other hand, wanted first the release of his man from his native Shiberghan," he argued.

However, some Taliban sources said one of their men overheard Turkistani talking to Gen Dostum on phone from Kandahar in Uzbek language and discussing his plan of duping the Taliban while finalizing the deal on exchange of prisoners. Subsequently, they said the Taliban became suspicious and kept a check on Turkistani's movements.

Omar threatens to stop cooperation with UN

News 780916
By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: An important Afghan opposition leader loyal to Uzbek warlord Gen Abdul Rasheed Dostum has been released by the Taliban after 10 months in captivity. Mulla Abdul Baqi Turkistani, who was freed in Kandahar a couple of days ago, has now reached Islamabad. He was made a prisoner on December 25 last year when the Taliban and Gen Dostum developed differences over the terms of exchange of prisoners of war held by the two sides.

Turkistani, who was a representative of Dostum's Junbishi-Milli Islami Afghanistan in Pakistan, had gone to Kandahar to finalize the terms of the exchange of prisoners. The Taliban made him a hostage when they felt that Gen Dostum was unwilling to release their five pilots and other important men in exchange for his top people held in Kandahar.

Talking to The News, Turkistani said the Taliban decided on at least three occasions in the past to release him and then changed their mind. He said the Taliban generally treated him well, even if their attitude towards him kept changing. "I

recognised the Taliban-led Afghan government, had proposed that Afghanistan's seat at the UN be left open as done by the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) until a final settlement of the Afghan conflict.

We are waiting for the UN re-

Taliban sign pact with US firm for phone network

News 780704
By Ihsan Khan

subscribers in the whole of the country.

The spokesman said close to 20,000 Afghan engineers and workers would be associated with the project.

The American firm would hold 80 per cent, while the remaining 20 per cent shares would be held by the Afghan Government. The spokesman quoted Breshinsky as saying that such ventures would help eliminate differences between the two countries. Peace and security in Afghanistan would further increase prospects of investment in that country, the PSL vice president was quoted as saying.

The United States does not recognise the Taliban government but has not barred private firms for conducting business or making investment in the war-ruined country. A multi-billion oil pipeline project extending from Turkmenistan to Pakistan via Afghanistan sponsored by American Unicel was reportedly called off following missile attack on suspected terrorist camps in southern Khost province.

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News 980916

Refugees report killing frenzy

News 980917

UNITED NATIONS: Refugees fleeing the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif have told UN officials of a "killing frenzy" by the Taliban following the religious militia's capture of the city, UN officials said Tuesday.

Officials from the UN High commissioner for refugees interviewed refugees who fled across the mountains to Pakistan and reported "indiscriminate killings," by Taliban troops, particularly of members of the Hazara ethnic minority, a UN official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

UN Spokesman Fred Eckhard said the eyewitness accounts corroborated reports about mass killings that followed the Taliban's seizure of the city from opposition forces on August 8.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has asked the three governments that recognise Afghanistan's Taliban rulers to intercede and persuade the Taliban to respect the rights of all people in Afghanistan, Eckhard said.

The three — Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — agreed to do so during a meeting Monday with Annan, he said.

The Taliban, meanwhile, has asked the United Nations to send a humanitarian mission into Bamiyan province, West of Kabul, where the Taliban is reporting massive territorial gains.

Central Bamiyan is dominated by Shias while the Taliban are rigidly Sunnis. Iran, a largely Shiite nation, is reporting atrocities by the Taliban in Bamiyan.

The United Nations was considering such a mission but was waiting for security assurances from the Taliban. The Taliban representative in New York was meeting with UN officials later Tuesday to discuss the security guarantees, officials said.

The United Nations, while condemning the deaths of the Iranians, was eager to send a mission there because they no longer have non-Afghan staff working in the country, a UN official said.

The Security Council was briefed on the situation Tuesday by Alvaro de Soto, Assistant Secretary-General, and was preparing a response. —AP

Anti-Taliban forces stage attacks around Bamiyan

News 980917

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Anti-Taliban forces have staged a series of counter-attacks around the central Afghan town of Bamiyan which the militia seized Sunday and have recaptured the local airstrip, UN sources said here Wednesday.

They said ethnic Hazara forces from the Hezb-i-Wahdat group staged the attacks to the southwest of the town and added that Taliban claims to control the strategic Shebar Pass were untrue.

The counter-attacks were launched Tuesday and Hazara forces were still fighting at Ahangaran eight kilometres from the town, the sources said.

One UN source said Hazara forces had entered the suburbs of the town. The Taliban militia controlled the old town near the feet of a pair of Buddha statues dating back to 622 A.D. the source said.

The sources said further fighting had erupted at the Afghan Pass about

25 kilometres to the west of Bamiyan town, and to the south in Ghazni province.

The sources said there had been no reports of massacres in the town.

Fears of massacres were heightened after an Amnesty International report said thousands of ethnic Hazaras — including women and children — were murdered after the northern opposition stronghold of Mazar-i-Sharif fell to the Taliban on August 8.

The report was confirmed by the UN but denied by the Taliban.

A representative of the Shiite Muslim faction Hezb-i-Wahdat — part of the anti-Taliban alliance — told the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) that its fighters had taken back several areas to the west and east of Bamiyan city.

The Wahdat official, Ali Azad, said the party's top leader Karim Khalili was personally directing the attacks.

AIP quoted a spokesman for the Sunni Muslim Taliban, Abdul Hae

Mutamem, as denying Wahdat's claim, saying there was no resistance in and around Bamiyan. "The whole area is under firm control of the Taliban," he said.

Iranian television reported that pro-Iranian Shiite forces in Afghanistan had launched a three-pronged offensive against the Taliban in Bamiyan.

The television, quoting a Hezb-i-Wahdat spokesman, said the Shiites and allied forces were stationed on the Kuh-Baba heights surrounding the city and had besieged Bamiyan from three directions.

"The Taliban positions have come under heavy fire from the alliance forces," it said.

The television also reported clashes in Bamiyan after "the arrival of auxiliary Wahdat forces." It said several Taliban and Pakistani commanders had been killed or wounded and charged that the Taliban were massacring people and had set fire to dozens of homes.

FP

980920

Nervous foreigners await better days in Afghanistan

JEAN-CLAUDE CHAPON

KABUL - The handful of foreigners left in the Afghan capital are adopting strict security measures despite assurances from the Taliban regime that they are completely safe in Kabul.

"We're keeping to a very low profile," said one expatriate, noting the situation was improving gradually for the dozen or so foreigners — Red Cross officials and two journalists — left in Kabul.

Another foreigner said that, like others, he restricted his movements in the city to a simple journey between his home and his office.

"We no longer go out alone, but if we must, then we are always accompanied by an Afghan colleague," he said.

"At any rate, we're so few in number and, there being no diversions, we stay at home when not at work," he added.

Most foreigners, who worked for either non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or the United Nations, left Kabul in two waves.

In July the NGOs left after rejecting the Taliban militia's orders to shift to a polytechnic institute campus lacking water and power,

in a part of Kabul largely destroyed during fighting among different Afghan factions between 1992 and 1995.

The second exodus, this time of UN officials, followed the killing on August 21 of Italian Carmine Calo of the UN Special Mission for Afghanistan (UNSCMA) in Kabul, a day after the US missile raid against alleged terrorist camps in Afghanistan.

A French diplomat, Eric Lavertu, working with UNSCMA, was injured in the attack, widely seen as carried out in revenge for the US raid.

"The situation is improving bit by bit, but it is difficult to know if it is 100 percent safe," said one foreigner, adding he was most afraid of the unruly non-Afghan Muslims backing the Taliban.

The Taliban regime has said the killing of Calo was a "regrettable isolated incident" and that the safety of international aid officials was guaranteed.

"United Nations people and others may live without worries in Kabul," a Taliban foreign ministry official told AFP.

The UN plans to send an evalua-

tion mission to Kabul soon prior to a gradual return of personnel.

"The Taliban have gone a long way in showing they can maintain control and security in Kabul and Kandahar," one senior UN source in Islamabad said earlier this month.

Since the former Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989, the UN has attempted to negotiate a peace settlement between warring parties, provided military observers and funded non-governmental organisation aid programmes.

"The issue is security and the timeframe really is irrelevant, it could be one month, three months, six months or even 12 months before we resume full scale operations — if at all," the UN source added. "But it needs to be pointed out that a 12-month timeframe is purely an arbitrary figure, it could be more, it could be less," he said.

Another UN source has said: "It is possible we might resume some form of operation, perhaps to Kabul, maybe by the end of this month — but we'll have to wait for a decision from New York." — AFP

Taliban offer to release 40 Iranians in exchange for Rabbani, Abdul Malik

News 980916

RIYADH: An official of the Afghan Taliban militia has offered to release 40 Iranian prisoners in exchange for leaders of the anti-Taliban alliance who have sought refuge abroad.

Mulawi Shihabeddin, the Taliban representative in Riyadh, also warned Iran that the Taliban would repel any Iranian military action, in an interview with the Saudi newspaper Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat on Tuesday.

The 40 Iranians were taken prisoner last week during the Islamic militia's assault on the central Afghan town of Bamiyan, the last stronghold of the Shiite opposition which fell to the Taliban on Sunday.

"We are ready to free them in exchange for dozens of Taliban members taken to Iran" and "if Iran hands over members of the opposition," including ousted president Burhanud-

din Rabbani, Shihabeddin said.

Rabbani was driven out of Kabul when the Taliban captured the Afghan capital in September 1996.

Shihabeddin also demanded the release of ethnic Uzbek General Abdul Malik, who is wanted by the Taliban as a traitor. The Taliban "does not want war with Iran," he said. "But we are ready to confront any foreign invasion." — AFP

Many Iranians opposed to war with Taliban

News 980921

TEHRAN: Widespread anger is raging in Iran over the killing of Iranian diplomats by the Taliban in Afghanistan, and some ordinary Iranians openly advocate military action.

But many others, who fear a repeat of a devastating eight-year war with Iraq which ended 10 years ago, oppose an attack and warn that Pakistan and even the United States could intervene to back the Taliban.

"Marches do not serve any purpose, except if they are a preliminary step before war," Ali, a 35-year-old shopkeeper, told fellow riders in a shared taxi in Tehran on Sunday.

He was referring to marches by tens of thousands of people in the capital and across Iran on Friday to mourn the eight diplomats and a journalist killed by Taliban fighters.

Marchers also chanted "Death to the Taliban", "Death to America" and "Death to the Taliban's backers", accusing Pakistan and the United States, Iran's arch-foe, of supporting the ruling militia in neighbouring Afghanistan.

"The Taliban have to be stopped. Somebody has to do it and I guess we will have to do it," Ali said in a resigned tone.

The popular mood in predominantly Shiite Muslim Iran has been aggravated by Iranian media reports of mass reprisal killings of Afghan Shiite opponents by the Taliban after their recent capture of the Shiite stronghold of Bamyan.

Iranian state television repeatedly carried scenes of what appeared to be summary executions by the Taliban.

"The Taliban are savages and should be taught a lesson. Iran should either attack them or support the Afghan opposition to fight them," a retired state employee said.

Foreign Ministry officials have taken part in television and radio shows to assure the public Iran would avenge its dead.

Officials have said Iran would exhaust all diplomatic means, seeking international condemnation and action against the Taliban, before considering other measures.

Many residents oppose any talk of attacks against the Taliban, citing Iran's difficult economic situation and the possibility of getting involved in a major conflict.

"I think the Taliban are more evil than Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, but Iran cannot afford a war. The

consequences of the war with Iraq were higher prices and destroyed cities, and we do not want a repeat," said Mohammad, a taxi driver.

"A war will not bring back the dead diplomats, it will only cause the death of hundreds of thousands more people. We have had enough martyrs," he said.

About one million Iranians and Iraqis were killed or wounded in the Iran-Iraq war.

"I do not think anybody really supports a war, once this emotional phase is over," said a housewife, who asked to remain anonymous.

"If a war comes Iran will be alone, while the Taliban will be backed by Pakistan and America, which might even intervene directly against us," she added.

Iranian officials and religious leaders have also been cautioning about being pushed into an unwanted war.

"We will maintain our military power and combat readiness, but at the same time we should be cautious and not get involved in an unwanted war," said Intelligence (internal security) Minister Qorbanali Dorri Najaafabadi, in remarks quoted by news-

papers on Sunday.

In the escalating crisis with Afghanistan, Tehran has massed at least 70,000 troops on the border and is sending 200,000 more to the frontier for military exercises.

On the other side of the border, the Taliban have moved up at least 6,000 fighters and threatened to hit Iranian cities if attacked.

Other Iranians expressed concern over the domestic political consequences of the confrontation.

"This crisis is exactly what the right-wingers want because now they can try to silence moderate newspapers such as Tous," a student said.

He was referring to a ban imposed last week on the outspoken moderate daily Tous by a revolutionary court which also ordered the arrest of several of the newspaper's staff members for unspecified national security violations.

Conservatives, who still control key levers of power despite moderate President Mohammad Khatami's landslide election last year, have criticised social and political liberties granted by the new president as a security risk and a threat to Islam.—Reuter

Dozens perish as rockets slam Kabul

FB 980921

KABUL (AFP) - Dozens of civilians were injured and an unknown number killed when anti-Taliban forces launched a third rocket attack in a day hitting a crowded market to the west of Kabul city centre late Sunday, an AFP reporter saw.

Charred and mutilated bodies were seen strewn across the road as rescue workers began digging in the wreckage for survivors.

A Taliban policeman said it was impossible to know the number of victims, but casualties could be "disastrous" as the market was crowded during the evening shopping hours.

Ambulances were seen carrying away bodies and human limbs.

The rocket directly hit a biscuit shop along the main road in the Karte Pawan area of the city, flattening it to the ground.

Several vehicles and at least one minibus were gutted in the attack, residents said.

The rocket came hours after an earlier attack killed 11 people and injured 30 in another residential area of Kabul.

The latest rocket attack was the third on Kabul in a day.

The first exploded on wasteland near the city's main airport

while the second devastated a two-story building and damaged seven houses in the densely populated Khair Khana district, residents and witnesses said.

Taliban claim 180 casualties

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Around 180 people were killed and wounded in opposition rocket attacks on Kabul on Sunday, the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) quoted a Taliban spokesman as saying.

At least 20 people were killed and 40 injured when a rocket hit the densely populated Khair Khana district while more than 100 were killed and wounded when a rocket slammed into a market later, Taliban spokesman Abdul Hai Mutmain told AIP.

Several more were killed after a third rocket landed near the city's Maryam high school, he said, adding that a total of 180 people were killed and wounded in the attacks.

Kabul for better ties with Iran: Afghanistan's ruling Taliban want peace with neighbouring Iran and will not impose any conditions on improving ties.

an official told AFP Sunday, on the eve of an international meeting on the war-torn country.

"We don't have any condition for normalisation of our relations with Iran," the Islamic militia's vice minister of information Mullah Abdurrahman Hotak said. "We only expect them to stop their interference in our affairs."

The call for improving relations came as the Taliban released five Iranians taken captive by their troops during battles against opposition mujahideen factions throughout the country in recent weeks.

The Iranians, who were released as part of a "goodwill" measure by the Taliban, flew into Islamabad from the southwestern Afghan city of Kandahar aboard a special Pakistan Air Force aircraft late Saturday.

They were being flown to Tehran on a Pakistan International Airlines flight on Sunday, diplomatic sources in Pakistan said.

"We hope they understand the sensitivity of the situation," Hotak said, adding, "if they have any problem with us we can discuss it through the UN."

Iran's parliament is to hold a closed-door session Tuesday on the crisis in relations, IRNA said.

Hezb commanders join Taliban

Hezb commanders join Taliban
No. 10 980920

dir Shah and Ghulam Sakti, who formerly belonged to the opposition, recently gave up resistance against the Islamic army and joined the Mujahideen. These commanders also handed over their arms and ammunition to the Islamic army.

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Two commanders, along with their ten fighters, joined ranks of the army of Islamic Emirate in Sanangan province, recently, Radio Kabul said.

Bakhtar news agency reports from Alibak city that the commanders, Na-

Taliban claim discovery of 3 more mass graves

News 980917

By Rahimullah Yusufzai

PIB HAWAR: The Taliban are claiming to have uncovered three more mass graves with bodies of about 800 of their colleagues killed in the battle for Mazar-i-Sharif in May last year.

Making the disclosure, Taliban Islamic Movement founder Mullah Mohammad Omar told The News that the mass graves were found in a desert outside Mazar-i-Sharif. "We are now considering whether to properly bury these Taliban in Mazar-i-Sharif or shift their bodies to Kandahar," he informed.

Speaking from his movement's headquarters, Kandahar, in southwestern Afghanistan, Mullah Omar said the United Nations and human rights organisations should take note of the killings of Taliban prisoners of war

(POWs) and condemn those who perpetrated this crime. "The Taliban are blamed for everything under the sun but excesses against them by Iran and its Afghan agents are conveniently ignored by the United Nations and human rights groups," he argued.

It may be recalled that mass graves of Taliban were found earlier in the Dasht-i-Laili desert near Shiberghan in Jaujan province. Abandoned wells stuffed with bodies of Taliban were also found. Over 2,500 Taliban were believed to have been killed in Mazar-i-Sharif and Shiberghan when Uzbek warlord Gen Abdul Malik turned against the Taliban after a brief, four-day alliance and joined hands with the Shiite Herat-i-Walidat to evict

Taliban from northern Afghanistan.

Another Uzbek warlord Gen Abdul Rashid Dostum had blamed his bitter rival, Gen Malik

for the mass killings of the Taliban prisoners of war.

Mullah Omar also referred to the recent killing of 30 Taliban prisoners of war by the retreating Herat-i-Walidat forces in Bamyan province in central Afghanistan and alleged that Iranian military officers gave order for the attack on the prison where the Taliban prisoners were being held.

"The 69 survivors of the attack, who included 14 who sustained injuries, told the Taliban officials that landmines were buried and decided as to who was guilty of provocations in the region.

"We are ready to present ourselves for accountability but no amount of pressure or threats by Iran or any other power would make us change our stance," he stressed. He said wardens also lined up prisoners for mock execution and beat them up with cables to force them into confessing.

According to Mulla Omar, the United Nations and human rights organisations should condemn all these acts of violence against the Taliban prisoners of war. "It is sad

"Religion is just an excuse. Although I am Sunni, I was severely beaten. My feet were swollen from whipping for a long time and there was no one to treat me," said another unidentified former prisoner.

"Group after group of them would come to punch and kick us as soon as they found out we are Iranians," he added.

Ali-Hossein Hosseini, another prisoner, said up to 200 people were forced to live in a small cell with terrible hygienic conditions.

Meanwhile, Iranian Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri said the Taliban were a threat to Islam and vowed that Iran would take action if deemed necessary for its "national security interests."

State-run television also quoted Nateq-Nouri, a hardliner, as saying Iran "will not cave in to the pressure exerted by any powers." The United States and other western countries have urged Iran to exercise caution in dealing with the Taliban.

Taliban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar, in comments published Sunday, said he does not foresee a war with Iran. He also told Al-Khaleej newspaper in the United Arab Emirates that the Taliban hopes for good ties with Iran.—AFP/AP

Freed prisoners speak of torture

News 980921

TEHRAN: Five Iranian prisoners released by the Taliban in a bid to ease tension between Afghanistan and Iran returned home on Sunday and some of them accused the militia of subjecting them to severe torture.

The official IRNA news agency said the five, who flew to Tehran from Islamabad on a Pakistan International Airlines flight, were truck drivers who had transported food and medicine to the "deprived people of Afghanistan."

It said the Taliban had accused them of carrying arms and supplies to the anti-Taliban alliance in northern Afghanistan.

One of the Iranians, Behnam Alipour, accused the militia of subjecting him to terrible acts of torture during his six-month detention.

"They forced me to lie on the ground along with a dozen other prisoners while a tank prepared to run over me," he said. "They ordered me to say I carried arms or I would be crushed under the treads of the tank," Alipour said. "But when I said I transported foodstuff, they would pull me out before I get smashed." He said wardens also lined up prisoners for mock execution and beat them up with cables to force them into confessing.

"Anyone of the militiamen who happened to see me or other prisoners would punch and kick us after describing us as Shites and followers of (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei)," Iran's supreme leader, he said.

2 diplomats who escaped Taliban killing return home

News 980917

TEHRAN: Two Iranian diplomats who escaped the Taliban's deadly raid on Iran's consulate in northern Afghanistan last month have returned to Iran, state radio reported Wednesday.

The radio, quoting "informed" sources, said one of the diplomats, Akbar Hosseini, was not present at the mission in Mazar-i-Sharif when the militia stormed into the building on August 8.

The other, Allahdad Shahsavani Qara-Hosseini, was in the building and was wounded by gunfire in the attack, which came hours after Mazar-i-Sharif, a former stronghold of the Iranian backed anti-Taliban alliance, fell to the militia.

Qara-Hosseini managed to escape after being "helped and treated by the good people of Afghanistan" and returned to Iran through the bordering province of Herat, in western Afghanistan.

Hosseini safely returned to Iran

through Bamyan, a Shia majority province in central Afghanistan.

The radio said Qara-Hosseini had been a witness to the "Taliban militiamen's catastrophic crime" at the consulate.

According to Iranian officials, 10 diplomats and a journalist of the official IRNA news agency were present at the mission during the Taliban's raid.

Taliban leaders, who claim the killings were carried out by "renegade" militiamen, said last week they had discovered the bodies of nine diplomats.

But Iran has brought back only seven bodies, including that of the IRNA journalist, and refused to accept two other bodies handed over by the Taliban this week.

The killings have increased tension between Tehran and the Taliban, and Iranian leaders have threatened to take revenge against the militia.—AFP